



# THE LORD'S DAY

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The Lord's day







Susan Constance Alibone  
from a loving friend

Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 1886

Hebrews 13<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> verses  
thence to  
Allen H Brown







✓  
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# THE LORD'S DAY:

ITS UNIVERSAL AND PERPETUAL OBLIGATION.

A PREMIUM ESSAY.

✓  
BY

A. E. WAFFLE, M.A.

SECOND EDITION.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Sabbath was made for man. . . .  
I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.  
—*New Testament.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

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THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,  
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## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

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THE Christian Sabbath is one of the most important institutions of the Christian religion. What we are going to do with it is a foremost question of our day. It was therefore selected as the subject for a premium book, under the conditions of the John C. Green Fund. In conformity with the trust creating that fund, the society published the following offer in July, 1883:

### ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS PREMIUM.

The American Sunday-School Union offers a premium of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS for the best book, written for the society, upon

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The book must be popular in character, of a "high order of merit," and consist of not less than 60,000 nor more than 100,000 words.

The treatise may be descriptive, narrative, expository or didactic. The obligations of the Sabbath may be based upon historical, physical and scriptural grounds, and its advantages urged upon physical, economical, spiritual or other considerations. Each author may also suggest any appropriate title for his work.

The manuscripts must be submitted to the Committee of Publication on or before October 1, 1884. Each manuscript should have a special mark, and the name and address of the author be sent at the same time in a sealed envelope bearing the same mark, and both addressed, post or express prepaid, to the American Sunday-School Union, 1122 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

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The manuscripts received in response to this offer were numbered in the order of their reception. Each sealed envelope containing the name of the author was given the same number as its accompanying manuscript. After a painstaking and protracted examination of the numerous essays, the Committee of Publication recommended that the premium be awarded to manuscript "No. 8," and this was approved by the Board. The essay was found to be by A. E. Waffle, then Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in Lewisburg University, Lewisburg, Pa.

The treatise clearly presents the argument for a weekly rest, as grounded in the nature of things, in the nature of man, and in the word of God. With the exception of some slight revision, and the insertion of a few additional facts in further illustration of some phases of the argument, the treatise is presented to the public as originally submitted by the author.

The society trusts the work will aid in promoting a better knowledge of the authority and necessity for a weekly rest, and a more reverent use of the Lord's day, thus accomplishing the purpose of the generous founder of the fund under which the book has been secured.

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# THE LORD'S DAY:

## ITS UNIVERSAL AND PERPETUAL OBLIGATION.

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### INTRODUCTION.

#### THE STATE OF THE QUESTION.

THE Sabbath Question is one of the great living questions of our day. Stated in its simplest and briefest form it is, Shall men work seven days in a week, occasionally using a day for play and recreation, as may be necessary, or shall one day in seven be set apart for rest and religious purposes? It is certainly an important question. If it involved no more than the use which men should make of one seventh of their time, it would be of great moment. To ask men to withdraw from their ordinary avocations for such a proportion of their time, and devote it to specific purposes, is no small demand, and one which ought not to be made without good reasons. Can such reasons be discovered and presented? Would men be just as well off, or better off, without a weekly Sabbath? Are

they, by its observance, depriving themselves of time that, used in other ways, would add one seventh to the productiveness of their labor, and so accelerate the progress of the race? Or would they save this time for industrial pursuits at the expense of benefits infinitely more valuable?

The Sabbath bases its claim for recognition upon two grounds: first, that it is necessary to the welfare of man; second, that its observance is commanded in the law of God. It denies that the divine command which requires its observance is arbitrary; but asserts that it is founded upon the nature of things. Can this two-fold claim be made good? Either the Sabbath involves a mere waste of time, or it is an institution without which men will become godless, morally and intellectually degraded, and physically enervated. Which is the true alternative?

The question is of such transcendent importance that every intelligent human being is bound to give it careful and patient consideration. Since the assumption is that the Sabbath is vitally related to the best interests of the individual and of the race, every man should be able to give an answer to the questions here propounded. He *must* answer them in one way or another; for though he may not be able to give a

good reason for his course in life, his conduct will be a practical answer to them. But the subject is so important that no man should decide to neglect the observance of the Sabbath until he has examined it in all its bearings.

The Sabbath question is always a living question, for in its practical form it is always before us. In this country, at the present time, it is assuming an unusual degree of prominence. As a nation we have not yet passed the formative period. Many things are yet to be determined before our national character will be fixed. Many questions are constantly presenting themselves for the decision of our people. Matters that once seemed settled are again disturbed by the influence of the foreign additions to our rapidly-growing population. New conditions are constantly arising to which it is demanded that we shall adjust our institutions. Among the questions thus reopened is the Sabbath question. It was once understood to be a settled thing that the Lord's day would be sacredly observed by all our people, except the depraved and morally reckless. But that is no longer the case. To say the least, the question is now an open one, whether we shall have a Sabbath, or whether Sunday shall be a mere holiday when it is not devoted, like the other days of the week, to

secular toil. There is some danger that the question will receive a practical answer over which all good men would lament. Is not the recent action of California in repealing its Sunday laws indicative of a change in the opinions and practices of the American people in respect to the Sabbath? It is certain that the relative amount of work done on Sunday in this country is constantly increasing, while the disregard of the Sabbath by pleasure-seekers is one of the most striking features of our times. The increase of labor is especially noticeable in the cases of railways and steamboats, Sunday newspapers and Sunday mails; but it may be seen in other lines of industry.

Says Dr. W. W. Atterbury, secretary of the Sabbath Association of New York city: "With the immense extension of our railway systems, Sunday labor is increasing at a rapid pace." Most of the railroads run a large number of Sunday trains. Of the half-million men employed by the railroad companies, a large proportion are obliged to work on Sunday or lose their places. The same is true of the horse-car companies in the cities, and of the companies that run steamboats upon our rivers and along our coasts. The great daily newspapers, with a few exceptions, issue a Sunday edition, which is sent over the country

on the morning of the Lord's day, and eagerly bought and read by the people who are unwilling to let one day pass without learning the news. A quarter of a century ago, such a thing as a Sunday newspaper had scarcely been heard of.

In some of our large cities—notably in Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, San Francisco and other cities of the West and Southwest—liquor-saloons, restaurants, groceries and retail stores of every description are open on Sunday in large numbers, some of them all day and others until noon. For every person who thus sells on Sunday there must be a large number who buy. In the delivery of milk, bread, meat, ice and other articles of domestic consumption, Sunday differs little from any other day of the week. Many theatres and other places of amusement are open on the Lord's day, and are largely patronized. Excursions, parades and secular concerts occur more frequently on Sunday than on other days.

The state of things is somewhat better in the eastern cities; a large majority of the people in Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Brooklyn and New York still observe the Sabbath; but even here the number of those who violate it in pleasure-seeking or in secular labor and business is evidently increasing. In summer, from the towns and cities immense excursions go out every Sun-

day for a picnic or a holiday at some favorite place of resort. In some cases not less than one tenth of the population are absent from home on Sunday for this purpose. Persons who a few years ago would have been ashamed to be seen in company bent on such an errand now spend almost every Sunday in this manner. On a pleasant Sunday afternoon the popular drives in almost any of our towns will be thronged with the turn-outs of those who are riding for pleasure. Walking to church one Sunday evening, in a thrifty western city, the writer saw more than ten times as many people thus engaged as he afterwards saw in the largest church in the place, and he has reason to fear that among them were not a few church members. He was told that the practice is very common in the West, and it is certainly not unknown in the East. In many of the rural districts horse-racing, driving, hunting, fishing, ball-playing and other out-of-door sports and games on the Lord's day are not uncommon.

It is not our purpose to discuss here the moral quality of these practices. We mention them as signs that a day once held sacred in this country is fast losing that character in the minds of a considerable portion of the population. It must certainly be true that persons who use Sunday in this way do not regard it as a holy day. For



them there is no longer any Sabbath. And the danger is that their sentiments will be shared by an increasing number of our people. The tendency to imitate others is strong in us all. It is not easy to be better than our neighbors. When a thing which promises pleasure or profit ceases to be disreputable, one must have strong principles to abstain from indulging in it. Moreover, such is the depravity of the human heart that it is far easier to corrupt and degrade a people than it is to purify and elevate them. As Virgil has it, "The descent to hell is easy, . . . but to recall your steps, and reascend to the upper air, this is labor, this is work."\* Thus we are in danger of becoming a nation without a Sabbath.

We cannot stop here to discuss the various means which are used to counteract this tendency. As we have opened our ears to the multitudinous voices that come to us from the different classes of our people, it has seemed that the protests against the destruction of the Sabbath grow feebler and feebler. It may be that the protest of the Church is becoming more vigorous as the danger increases; but that protest does not have its proper effect, because the trumpet which raises

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\* *Facilis descensus Averno*; . . .

*Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,  
Hoc opus, hic labor est.*—*Æd.* vi. l. 126, *sq.*

the note of warning gives an "uncertain sound." To say nothing of the inconsistent practices of those who profess to have a high regard for the sacredness of the Lord's day, there is such a variety of opinions concerning the reasons for observing it that men are in doubt whether it rests upon any solid foundation. When Christian teachers disagree on any point of doctrine, it is natural for the indifferent to say that no plain revelation has been made on the subject of dispute, and that, therefore, it has small claim to their attention.

It would not be profitable, even if it were possible with our limited space, to review the controversies on the Sabbath question which have occurred in this country. It has been a subject of discussion among Protestants ever since the Reformation. Until a comparatively recent period these controversies were confined to Europe, while there was a general agreement among American Protestants. But within a few years, several of the conflicting opinions held on the other side of the Atlantic have found advocates among us. All we undertake here is to state in the briefest possible form the most important of these views. We consider only the opinions of those persons who believe in God, in the Bible and in the absolute supremacy of the divine

law. Men and women who have no regard for the law of God—who would not keep sacred the Lord's day if they knew that God had commanded it—are objects of pity, and all Christians should labor and pray for their salvation; but their opinion of the Sabbath is of no weight, and need not trouble us. Until a man recognizes the fact that the commands of God must be obeyed, he is not entitled to speak on a question like this. If he does speak, his voice should be heard as the voice of an enemy who would destroy every divine institution. It is worse than folly for us to be influenced in this matter by the theories or desires of foreigners who have brought from Europe ecclesiastical or papal notions of the Lord's day, or by those of blatant infidels and free-thinkers, who hate everything which reminds them of God and of their obligations to him. But when honest and intelligent Christian men present their views of the Sabbath, we are bound to give them attention and to discover if possible how much truth and how much error they contain.

The extreme position on one side of this subject is that taken by the Seventh-day Baptists, who hold that we are bound to keep the Jewish Sabbath. They claim that, the fourth commandment being still in force both in spirit and in

letter, we are bound to keep the seventh day of the week, beginning on Friday at sunset and closing on Saturday at the same hour. These people are not numerous, but they are intelligent, pious and very zealous in the propagation of their views. Though it is undoubtedly erroneous, some deference must be paid to their opinion, since they claim to be the only Christians who keep the fourth commandment, and charge all others with violating the Sabbath. Though their numbers are small, their influence is considerable; but we must regard it as calculated to hinder rather than promote the proper observance of the Christian Sabbath.\*

At the other extreme are those Christians who maintain that the Sabbath has been wholly abolished; that there is no distinction of days in the kingdom of Christ; that the advanced Christian does not need to observe "times and seasons;" and that, therefore, the Lord's day should not be regarded as having any peculiar sanctity. They claim that all days should be made religious, and that to mark one as specially so is to secularize the rest.† The number of those who maintain this theory is not very great, and, so far as we

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\* In Chapters IX. and X. their position is shown to be untenable.

† Called by some the "Antinomian" view.

know, they do not constitute a separate denomination of Christians or an organized party of any form. It is easy to see that their influence is not calculated to counteract the tendency to destroy the sanctity of the Lord's day.

Those who would maintain the sanctity of the Lord's day are divided into various parties, on account of the different reasons which they present for regarding it as a holy day. Some say that the only reason for keeping it holy is that the Church has ordered it.\* Romanists and all those who agree with them concerning the authority of the Church are satisfied with this reason. But the great majority of the American people do not recognize this authority, and therefore the acceptance of such a view would be fatal to the general observance of the day.

Other friends of the Lord's day maintain that its claim to observance rests wholly upon the example of the apostles and early Christians; that there is no law concerning it, but that we ought to follow in the footsteps of those holy men.† This may have some force with those who regard the apostles as acting under inspiration; but the great mass of men will never stop to inquire

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\* Known as the "Ecclesiastical" view.

† Known as the "Dominical" view.

whether they were or not; and even if the force of their example be acknowledged, it teaches us nothing except that we ought, in some way, to mark the first day of the week as a memorial of Christ's resurrection.

Others would have us keep it holy as a mark of love to Christ, because it is *the Lord's day*. This would be a good reason to those who love him, but has no force with others. And many will say that Christ was very pitiful to the poor when he was on earth, and that it is contrary to his disposition and purpose to deprive them of any lawful recreation and pleasure. They will argue that he never made any strict rules to put people under bondage, and so long as our actions in themselves are not wrong we can best show our love to him by accepting the liberty he gives us to follow our own pleasure.

Others would have us observe the Lord's day for the sake of our fellow men, in order that they may have a day of rest and opportunity for mental, moral and religious improvement.\* But this leaves every one to judge what is best, not only for himself but also for others. The great majority do not recognize at all man's religious needs, and, if they conceded the advantage of an

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\* Sometimes called the "Humanitarian" view.



occasional holiday, would not admit that there was any need of holy days.

Others maintain that the law of the Sabbath, as given at the beginning of the world's history and re-enacted on Sinai, is still binding, and that the Sabbath has simply been transferred to the first day of the week.\* To this it is objected that there is no proof of the existence of a Sabbath before the time of Moses, and that it must, therefore, be considered a purely Jewish institution, which was never designed for any other people; and that there is no evidence sufficient to satisfy men's minds that the Jewish Sabbath was ever transferred to the Christian Church. These objections, presented by those who would have the Lord's day kept sacred, but who base its claim to observance on other grounds, are gladly taken up by those who do not wish to observe the Sabbath at all. Thus the ungodly scoff at the proposal to perpetuate the Jewish Sabbath by simply changing the day of the week on which it should be observed.

Still others hold that the fourth commandment is now binding; that the permanent elements of the Jewish Sabbath have been preserved in

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\* The extreme position of those who hold the "Christian-Sabbath" view.

the Lord's day, but that it has been modified to suit the needs and conditions of the Christian Church.\*

While the friends of the Lord's day are thus divided in their counsels, the multitude of those who violate its sanctity is steadily increasing. When the former enter their protest against its desecration, the latter ask, "What good reasons can you give for keeping it holy? You do not know yourselves why it should be sanctified; what right have you to ask us to observe it simply because you *think* we ought?" It is true that something is being done by the various Sabbath associations of the country to preserve this institution; and the influence of the churches is not without its effect, though far too often their members seem to have no decided convictions of duty on the subject; but comparatively little will be accomplished until we have a clear, well-founded doctrine of the Sabbath. If professing Christians waver and hesitate, and doubt whether they may not do on the first day of the week whatever they do on other days, because they feel themselves bound by no law concerning it

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\* The ordinary "Christian-Sabbath" view. The more important of these reasons for keeping holy the Lord's day are fully considered in Chapter XI. For the literature maintaining them, see Appendix A.



much more will those who are indifferent to religion feel that the notion of a holy Sabbath is a superstition of the past, and repudiate all obligation to observe it, until it can be shown that it is a divine institution, established to meet a great want in the nature of man.

We have no real fear that the Sabbath will be finally destroyed. God will care for his own. Already there are signs that the efforts of those who would destroy it will be met and baffled at every point. The conscience of the Christian public is awakening on the subject, and henceforth its influence in favor of a proper observance of the Lord's day will be more vigorous and efficient. Nevertheless, we believe that one of the crying needs of our times is a correct doctrine of the Sabbath presented in plain and simple terms, so that all may understand the reasons for its observance.

This essay is an attempt to prove that the Sabbath originated in a law of Jehovah; that it was meant for all men; and that the obligation to observe it is perpetual. In the examination of its history we hope to arrive at the truth concerning the foundation on which the institution rests. We hope to show that God commanded it, not arbitrarily, but because a weekly Sabbath is necessary to the highest welfare of man. So far

as possible controversy will be avoided in the discussion; but in examining the conflicting theories of the Sabbath which have been put forth it will be necessary to show to what extent they are false or defective, in order that we may arrive at the truth. Some of these will have to be rejected as utterly false and worthless. In the case of others we shall find that they contain much of truth, which may be of great advantage to us in framing a correct opinion concerning the nature and obligation of the Lord's day. He is not a wise man who rejects truth because he finds it mixed with error. As well might the gold-hunter throw away the specks of gold which he should find imbedded in the rocks, and say he would have none but the pure. Our aim is to reach the exact truth concerning the Sabbath. We are not committed to the defence of any particular theory. We confess that we love the Lord's day, and that we have been accustomed to regard it as a great blessing; but if fair investigation of the subject should lead to the conclusion that it is a human and needless institution, established by men in a mistaken effort to perpetuate a feature of Judaism which God meant to be temporary, we will accept the fact. It is in this way alone that men can discover the truth. We ask only that those who go with us into the

investigation shall, in the same way, dispossess their minds of every preconceived theory, and be ready to give every fact and argument its exact weight. And if the conclusion is that the Sabbath is a divine institution, resting upon a sure foundation of natural law, and therefore essential to the welfare of man, then may we do all in our power to secure its universal observance.

This work has been prepared for readers of ordinary intelligence, and is not addressed especially to scholars. For those who have made a thorough and scholarly examination of the subject, there is nothing new in the facts which it discusses. It makes no pretence to great learning. In most cases it quotes authorities which are accessible to every reader, and only so many of these as are necessary to the line of proof which is followed. The literature of the subject is so immense that it would be useless to direct attention to more than a small portion of it. The book is simply an attempt to place within the reach of those who have not time or opportunity to study the matter for themselves a clear, concise statement of the reasons for believing that the Sabbath is a necessity for man and a divine institution, and, in its essential features, of perpetual obligation. The writer asks attention to the subject because of its intrinsic importance,

and because it is a living subject for the American people. He asks that the facts and arguments here presented may receive fair and candid consideration, because he believes that he has adopted a method of discussion which will make it easy for every honest and intelligent reader to discover the truth concerning the Sabbath. The nature of the subject is such that he does not expect readers of any other character.

# PART I.

## NECESSITY OF THE SABBATH.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE ARGUMENT STATED.

Come now, and let us reason together.—ISAIAH 1 : 18.

To show that any institution is universally necessary to the welfare of man furnishes presumptive evidence that its establishment has not been neglected by the Creator. In this statement it is taken for granted that God is a benevolent being. It is not necessary to prove this point by a labored argument, for if God exists he must be a being of infinite perfections, and so of infinite benevolence. If he is such a being, it is inconceivable that he would create other beings and place them in circumstances where they could not reach their highest development, or deprive them of anything essential to their welfare. For example, if man is to reach a high destiny, it is absolutely necessary that he should know God, his character and laws, and that he should know

his own origin, nature and destination. This need furnishes a kind of proof that God will reveal himself to men; that he has revealed himself and made known all the truths which the human soul must have or perish in darkness. Suppose an earthly parent knew that his beloved child, lost in a forest, was about to walk over a precipice and perish, and that by a word, or a flash of light from a lantern, he could save him; would he withhold the warning? Or suppose the child was not in imminent danger of destruction, but was wandering about in the darkness vainly looking for his home, and the father could guide him by placing a light in the window; would he leave the loved one still to wander and perish? Have we any right to suppose that God is any less benevolent and kind than a good earthly parent? Do we not instinctively feel the truth of Christ's words when he says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"\* We know that God must be too good to withhold anything from us which is really necessary to our welfare, and which we are capable of receiving. This is one of the strongest arguments for an

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\* Matthew 7 : 11.

inspired revelation. We know that man needs it; that he is lost and will inevitably perish without it; and so we believe that God has spoken through "holy men of old" for our instruction, guidance and salvation. Men, over-learned and over-wise, may find fault with the form of the revelation; they may pick flaws in the book that contains it. But while we feel this deep-seated craving for light upon the great subjects that concern our eternal destiny, and know that it is a noble craving for what is essential to our highest welfare, we cannot believe that our Father has left us in darkness. The cry of the nature he has created will be heard. Jehovah must be of those gods that have eyes but see not, and ears but hear not, if he can leave us to struggle alone. We know that the Infinite One is not thus indifferent to our needs, but "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Thus we rejoice in the belief that our need—a need which he has created and which belongs to our very nature—has moved him to give us an inspired revelation.

The same argument applies to anything which may be supposed to have a divine origin. If it can be shown that it supplies some real and universal want in the nature of man, but that, nevertheless, man would not have been likely to dis-



cover it for himself, it is rendered extremely probable that it came from God. Of course, if the need is an artificial one, if it is merely a desire for that which serves no good purpose, the argument does not hold. But just as bodily hunger finds its supply in food, and thirst in water, so a real and universal hunger of man's nature will find its supply in some provision of a benevolent deity. When, therefore, the origin of an institution which serves such a purpose is ascribed to God, the only way in which the assertion can be successfully controverted is by showing that man has established and maintained it for himself. The benevolent character of the institution is indirect proof of its divine origin. When there is manifest congruity between an act and the person who is said to have performed it, less evidence is required to fix it upon him than when it seems out of all harmony with his character. When a man is charged with a crime, to prove that he has a bad character is ordinarily the first step in establishing his guilt. If this can be effected, his guilt at once becomes probable, and much less direct evidence is needed to convict him. A previous good character, on the contrary, is held to be proof of innocence, and nothing but the strongest evidence will fasten crime upon one who can establish a claim to it. The same line



of proof holds good in the case of virtuous acts. If you hear that a man has performed an act of remarkable liberality, it will not be incredible to you if you know him to be a very generous man. Let us suppose a case which exactly illustrates our argument. You know a lad who, you think, ought to have a college education. You know that his father is a wise and good man, and that he has abundant means to educate his children. If you should hear some day that he has decided to send his son to college, would you doubt it? Would you require any great amount of proof to convince you that the report was true? Why is not this argument good in its bearing upon an institution which is said to have a divine origin? If the institution is good in its nature, if it meets a universal want in man, is not all objection to ascribing it to God removed?

This is the first argument which we propose to use in establishing the divine origin and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath. If we can show that the Sabbath is an institution which is necessary to the welfare of man, that it meets a real want in his nature, and that it could have had only a benevolent origin, we shall be prepared for the ready reception of any direct evidence that it came from God. If man has always needed this institution; if God created him with a nature

which could not reach its highest development without the Sabbath; if such a rest-day is essential, not only to his happiness, but also to his moral redemption and improvement,—we are prepared to believe that God has given it to him, and that to reject it would be to scorn a divine gift and to sin against a divine law. We do not say that proof of its necessity is proof of its divine origin. We claim only that proof of its necessity to our highest welfare makes it probable that God established it, and prepares us to ascribe to it a divine origin with a less measure of direct proof than would be otherwise required.

And this is not all. If the Sabbath is necessary to the well-being of man, if it meets a real want in his nature, then it belongs alike to all races and nations of men, and its observance is equally binding upon all. If this institution had its origin in the benevolence of God, moved to action by his perception of man's need, it was not meant to be limited to the Jewish nation, or to any particular time, but was intended to be perpetual, and serves its purpose only when it is observed by all peoples. God hath "made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."\* In the Bible men are treated in accordance with this fact. One of its central

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\* Acts 17 : 26, Revised Version.

principles is that, in his dealings with men, God looks straight through all that is superficial and accidental, and considers only the essential nature that is at the centre. He treats man *as man*. This is true of his estimates of character. “*The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*” \* It is true of rank. When Naaman came to Elisha to be healed of his leprosy, “he wanted to be treated as a great man that happened to be a leper; Elisha treated him as a leper that happened to be a great man.” † It is true of races. “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” ‡ If one characteristic of Christ’s work is more prominent than any other, it is that he wrought in behalf of *men*, and not of any particular class. His last command was that his gospel should be preached to all the world. These facts suggest an important truth. They show that the Bible was meant to be a book for the whole race. It is a mistake to say that its revelations and precepts were meant for the Jews alone. It is not safe to say that of any command or any institution, unless

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\* 1 Samuel 16 : 7.

† Alexander Maclaren, Sermons, series iii. p. 244.

‡ Acts 10 : 34, 35.

we have a warrant for such a limitation in some statement of the Bible. Otherwise we are to conclude that these commands were given *through* the Hebrew people to all mankind. This could fitly be done, because they were a part of the race. The Jew was a man, and his nature did not differ essentially from universal human nature. What was good for him as a man is good for all men. What was binding upon him as a man is binding upon all men. If he needed the Sabbath, all men need it. If it was a sin for him to violate it, it is a sin for any man in any age or country to violate it. This is true, of course, only on the supposition that it was given to him as a man and not, primarily, as a Jew. On certain conditions a thing may be good for one race or one age, and useless or baneful to another. When a people are ignorant and depraved, incapable of thought and self-control, an absolute monarchy is, perhaps, the only form of government that can be maintained among them. An intelligent and virtuous people know how to appreciate and preserve the priceless gift of liberty, and to exercise self-government. But this difference is the result of certain accidents which do not affect the real nature of each individual man in either nation. These differing conditions are superficial, and do not touch the essential human nature of every

man among them. There are no such differences among men that a need growing out of the nature of one is not felt by every other. For example, all need the gospel, and none are so civilized that they can be saved without repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. All have a sense of sin, and all believe in some form of a future life. Every mother loves her child, and the love of the sexes for each other is everywhere the strongest passion. These, and other things which might be mentioned, show the essential unity and solidarity of the human family. It follows that if the Sabbath is good for any race of men, *as men*, it is good for all races. If it meets a want of our nature, and was established for that reason, it was established for all men, and will be obligatory so long as the present conditions of human existence continue. When these conditions are changed, when the millennium comes, or when we have "a new heaven and a new earth," men may not need what their natures have hitherto demanded. But this argument is meant to apply only to man in his present state—to man with an earthly life to live, and with human duties to perform.

So far our statements have been hypothetical. To make the argument of any value, we must show that the Sabbath is essential to the welfare of man. If that can be done, we shall have pre-

sumptive evidence that God established it for the whole race and for all time. It may be asked at this point, "What do you mean by the Sabbath?" We mean the cessation of ordinary work on every seventh day, and the devotion of that day to rest and religious exercises. This is a very general definition, but it is sufficiently precise for our present purpose. It will be time enough to consider *how* we are to keep the day when we have determined whether we are under obligations to keep it at all. What we now undertake to show is that the devotion of one day in seven to rest and religious exercises is essential to man's physical, intellectual, social, moral and religious welfare. We go farther than to say that it is desirable or expedient. If it is not essential, our argument falls to the ground. If the loss or the universal disregard of the Sabbath would not result finally in the ruin of man, if its proper observance by all would not result in elevating him to a nobler position than he has yet attained, we are willing to surrender the case and acknowledge that the Sabbath should be classified among obsolete and worn-out institutions. And we desire to assert only so much as can be established by a fair appeal to the facts of experience and consciousness. Let us now address ourselves to the task of considering whether the Sabbath is a necessity.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE SABBATH NECESSARY TO MAN'S PHYSICAL WELFARE.

Fresh glides the brook and blows the gale,  
Yet yonder halts the quiet mill ;  
The whirring wheel, the rushing sail,  
How motionless and still !  
Six days of toil, poor child of Cain,  
Thy strength the slave of want may be ;  
The seventh thy limbs escape the chain—  
A God hath made thee free.—LYTTON.

MAN's nature is complex. He has both a soul and a body. The interdependence of these two makes it almost as important to care for one as for the other. It may be said that man's primary duty is to care well for his body. For all the practical duties of life, he needs to be a good animal. If he cares only for the body, he becomes a mere animal; but if he neglects the body altogether, what can he do in life that is worth doing? When its strength is gone and its functions deranged, he becomes a helpless and miserable creature. If he has been dependent upon manual labor for his livelihood, he now becomes a beggar or a burden to his friends. If he has been an intellectual toiler, he finds that the mind will not work when the body on which it de-

pende has become diseased. There can be no clear thinking, no steady and profitable application to intellectual pursuits, when the digestion is impaired, the nervous system shattered and the body generally enfeebled. The enjoyment of life depends more upon the state of the bodily health than upon any other condition.

“Health is the vital principle of bliss.”

Men grow despondent, gloomy, foreboding and fretful when the general health is impaired. They feel that their efficiency is gone, that they have nothing to hope for, and that life is not worth living. Acute pain in some bodily member may be borne with resignation and cheerfulness, but disease which enfeebles the whole body destroys the enjoyment of life. It acts upon the spirits, the mind itself becomes diseased, the will is powerless to resist the baleful influences, and even the consolations of religion are hardly sufficient to make life tolerable. Faith itself is darkened when body and mind are thus disordered.

But the damage is not confined to the individual or to a single generation. Our natural descent is dependent upon bodily functions, and so disease, or a tendency to it, in parents is transmitted from generation to generation. This is especially the case with feebleness. Weak or worn-out parents



never have strong or healthy children. Thus a whole race may, in a few generations, become enervated and enfeebled.

It is evident that man cannot reach his highest development without due attention to the body. This is true both of the individual and of the race. Boast as we may of our possession of mental and moral powers, the fact still remains that the body cannot be neglected without disaster to the whole man. Bodily health is the only foundation on which can be built the superstructure of a noble life or a noble civilization. Other things being equal, the men who win in the race of life are the men who have the best bodies. Those peoples who have the most physical strength and endurance are the peoples who rule or will rule the world. The power of the Hebrews to suffer and to endure and still to persist as a separate people is largely owing to their careful observance of the laws of health. The Anglo-Saxon is gaining the mastery of the world as much by virtue of his superior *physique* as for any other reason. These facts serve to illustrate the great principle that if man is ever to reach the ideal standard of development, he must take the best possible care of his body. Physical development is not the end in view, but it is an essential means to the attainment of the highest ends.

Labor is a necessity for the great mass of men in this life. Even existence cannot be maintained without it, and the more well-directed labor there is performed, the more rapid is the progress of the race. If any do not work, either with brain or hands, it is because they are unable or unwilling to contribute their share to the promotion of the welfare of humanity. When men can work and will not, it is because they are selfish and mean enough to live upon the labor of others without making any return. Though a few may be relieved from the necessity of labor, the great majority of mankind have no choice in the matter. They must work or perish, and generally they need to employ all their powers.

The tax of labor must be paid chiefly by the body. This is readily perceived in the case of manual labor, but it is also true of intellectual work. The toil of the brain exhausts the physical strength more rapidly than the toil of the hands. A healthy man can work at the latter from ten to fourteen hours a day without injury, but few men can do brain work for more than eight hours a day, and most find themselves exhausted with six. We do not need to dwell upon facts so well known, but may recur to the fact that labor primarily taxes the body. The great problem of every toiler is to do his work and, at the same

time, maintain his physical health and strength. This is because the body has only a limited amount of power and endurance. Even the strongest cannot labor unbrokenly for more than a few hours. Man is so constituted that the forces of his system are soon exhausted. He soon becomes weary, and after a time further exertion is simply impossible. But it is possible to recuperate his body and restore its wasted strength and energy. This law of waste and repair is well known, though the best methods of preserving the proper balance are not so well understood. If the repair is more than the waste, there is a constant addition to the strength. This should be the case with the young who have not reached full physical development. If it is less, the strength is impaired, the health is injured and death soon ensues. This is what takes place as men grow old, though very slowly when the conditions of health are observed. When one has reached full physical development he should endeavor to make the repair at least equal to the waste. This is essential to the preservation of health and the prolongation of life to its greatest practicable limit. We have already shown how important physical vigor and health are to the happiness and efficiency of individuals and to the welfare of the race. If human life and energy

are of any value, it is important to prolong life as far as possible. Every premature death robs society of a working force, on which it has established a claim by its care of the worker during his early years.

To repair the waste caused by labor, so as to preserve the health and keep the strength at the maximum of efficiency, two agents must be employed. They are food and rest. These are the great restoratives of the laborer's exhausted energies. Neither alone will avail; both must be employed. However, it does not belong to this discussion to treat of the former; we are, at present, concerned with the necessity for physical rest. To show that man needs a weekly day of rest, we shall present the arguments which may be found (1) in the constitution of nature, (2) in the testimony of physicians, and (3) in the results of experience.

We find hints of this necessity in the periodicity which marks the activity of every form of organic life. It may be questioned whether this law of periodicity, in modified form, does not extend even to the inorganic world. It is now well known that metals and woods which are used in implements of various kinds will render greater service, if given intervals of rest, than they will if subjected to constant strain. For example, it

is found to be economical to let car-wheels "rest" after they have been some time in use. But the law is most evident in the activity of living and organized beings. Plants have their regular periods of growth and rest, or of fruit-bearing and rest, during each succeeding year. The higher we go in the scale of life the shorter are the periods. Animals can maintain uninterrupted activity for only a short time. At regular intervals there is a demand for sleep—a complete cessation of all voluntary activity—which no effort of will can resist. The action of this law may be temporarily suspended, but it is impossible permanently to modify it. After a time the spur and the whip are applied in vain to the jaded beast: he will fall asleep in his tracks. In the case of man, nature insists upon a long period of sleep every twenty-four hours. Rigorously each day she demands for him this time of complete repose of mind and body. If disease or torture render it impossible for several days in succession, death is the inevitable result. So absolute is this law, and so sudden and terrible are the penalties of its violation, that very few ever think of disregarding it. In fact, it cannot be violated long by the unaided will, for nature will push her demand for sleep until the will is broken down.

Thus, on the constitution of nature we find

plainly written this law of periodic activity with intervals of rest. It does not matter whether we call it a law of nature or a law of God, we must obey it or perish. But does nature indicate that anything more than a daily rest is demanded for man and other animals of the higher orders? We need not be surprised to find that these complex organizations require more than one kind of rest.

In the case of man careful and scientific observation has shown that the daily rest is not sufficient. Men who work hard every day, as hard as most men must work, soon become jaded and worn, even though they are careful to take the requisite amount of sleep. The waste is greater than the repair, and health and strength fail. Whether this would be true if men were physically perfect, and perfectly observed all the laws of health, it is impossible to say. We are obliged to take men as they are, and to consider their present necessities. In his present condition man needs *days* as well as hours of rest. Indeed we are beginning to discover that it is a good thing for hard-worked men to have, now and then, a week or even a month of rest. The man who works every day in the year exhausts his vital force faster than it can be replenished by food and sleep. One physiological reason for this can be



stated in a few words. It is well known that health and vigor and even life itself are dependent upon a proper supply of oxygen. A man is constantly inhaling oxygen and consuming it in the support of his vital force, producing thus the carbonic acid gas which he expires. In order to keep his vital force good he must take in as much as he consumes. But when he is working, or actively exercising in any way, it is impossible to do this, and the extra supply demanded is taken from his blood and muscles. While thus engaged the amount of that which is necessary to the support of his life—which is really his life—is constantly lessening. Some interesting experiments conducted at Munich show that a hard day's work diminishes the amount of oxygen in the system about one ounce.\* It has been found that the laborer does not recover during the night the oxygen he has thus overdrawn. If he recovers five-sixths of it—and this is a liberal estimate—in one year of entirely unbroken drudgery he will have consumed about four pounds more of oxygen than he has inhaled. As this represents his life-force more fully than any other element of his body, it does not require an elaborate calculation to show that he must soon be-

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\* See "The Annual of Scientific Discovery" for 1869, p. 298.

come exhausted. A few years of such unrespited work must wear him out and send him to his grave. In the natural course of things the rate of his exhaustion will be rapidly accelerated, for, if the support of himself and his family requires a specific amount of work, as he grows weaker he must make a constantly-increasing effort to perform his allotted task, and it is the amount of effort that determines the rate of exhaustion. But an occasional day of rest will make good this overdraft. When his system has been thus overtaxed for a time, if he takes a day of rest he inhales more oxygen than he consumes. If the rest day comes just at the right time, it will serve completely to restore the equilibrium and make him as good as new. The man thus gets back the life which has been spent; he is literally recreated. The man who labors continuously must die early, but the man who takes sufficient rest to keep his vital force at the normal point may live on to a good old age. This is not fanciful; it is a simple physiological fact. It is not a matter of religion; it is a question of science. Whatever power made man so that he inhales and consumes oxygen and exhales carbonic acid gas, so constituted him that periods of rest must follow protracted seasons of labor. Whether or not the soul of man needs a Sabbath—whether or



not he has a soul—it is certain that his body needs days of rest which shall come at regular intervals.

But how frequent shall be these rest-days? Here nature does not, perhaps, furnish us with an unerring guide. When night comes she says to all workers, "It is now time to rest and sleep," but she has set no unmistakable mark upon any day as a sign that it must be used for rest. Men feel the need of occasional rest-days, but how to obtain them and how frequently they shall come are points difficult to arrange. Left to their own judgment, they could not agree upon the requisite number of rest-days in a year. But men are so bound together in their occupations that it is impossible for any considerable portion of a community to cease from their ordinary work unless all do. Certain classes might be able to stop work whenever they pleased, but the majority could not. Here, then, is a want which man cannot supply. We claim that in the weekly rest-day the want is exactly met. In the first place, here is a point of agreement, or at least the suggestion of a common basis of agreement. When every seventh day is suggested as the right proportion by a people who claim to have received it from God, who have tried it for centuries and found it to work well, it is worth while

for others also to try it. Wherever this arrangement has been tested the results have proved to be in its favor. Wherever they have been brought into contrast with the results of other arrangements, they have furnished striking proofs of its wisdom. The French republic tried one day in ten and found that this did not give rest-days enough. Those Asiatic peoples who have no rest-days show by their want of physical vigor and strength the disastrous effects of unremitting toil. Certain classes of workmen in Europe have no rest-days, and the result is that they are feeble and short-lived. Horace Greeley says that he saw no old men in the workshops of Paris. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church has, by its system of fast-days and festivals, given to some of the peoples of Europe rest-days more numerous than one day in seven. The results are idleness and enervation. One day in seven for rest seems to be exactly the right proportion. It has been found that the amount of exhaustion of the oxygen of the system—in other words, of the life-power—by six days of labor is the amount that can be supplied by a day of complete rest.\* With this arrangement the working man is enabled to hold

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\* See Appendix B.

his own in the matter of physical vigor, provided he has sufficient food and sleep. William Von Humboldt was not a special friend to revealed religion, but he was an eminent scientist and a close student of man's physical needs. On this subject he bears valuable and important testimony in the following words: "I completely agree with you that the institution of fixed days of rest, even if it had no connection with religious observance, is a most pleasing and truly refreshing idea to every one who has a humane mind toward all classes of society. The selection of the seventh day is certainly the wisest that could have been made. Although it may seem, and to some extent may be, optional to shorten or lengthen labor one day, I am convinced that six days is the just and true measure suitable to men in regard to their physical powers and perseverance in a monotonous employment. There is likewise something humane in this, that the beasts that aid man in his labor share in the rest. To lengthen the time of returning rest beyond measure would be as inhuman as foolish. I have had an example of this in my own experience. When I spent several years in Paris in the time of the revolution, I saw this institution, despite its divine origin, superseded by the dry and wooden decimal system. Only the tenth day

was what we call Sunday, and all customary work continued for nine long days. This being evidently too long, Sunday was kept by several as far as the police laws would permit it, and thus again too much idleness was the result. Thus we are always between two extremes so soon as we remove from the safe and regulated middle path." \* Proudhon, the French political writer and socialist, was another man who looked at the question purely from an economic point of view. After praising Moses for his skill and wisdom in fixing the right proportion between days of labor and days of rest, he says: "The certainty of the science is proved by the result. Decrease the week by only one day, and the labor is insufficient for the repose; increase it by the same amount, and it is too much. Fix every three days and a half, a half-day of relaxation, and you increase by dividing the day the loss of time, and by breaking the natural unity of the day the numerical balance of things is broken. If you grant, on the other hand, forty-eight hours of rest after twelve consecutive days of work, you kill the man with inertia after having exhausted him with fatigue." †

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\* "Letters to a Friend," London, 1849.

† "On the Observance of Sunday," p. 67.

We turn now to our second line of argument, namely, that which may be found in the testimony of those who make the laws of health the study of their lives. A large number of able and experienced physicians have borne witness to the necessity which is upon workingmen to rest on every seventh day. These testimonies have so frequently been published as to make their quotation here unnecessary. They have never been refuted; so far as we can learn, no one has ever attempted their refutation. With remarkable unanimity they assert that men, whether toiling with brain or hands, who rest one day in seven, will be healthier, will accomplish more work year by year and will live longer than those who work every day. They say that members of the latter class nearly always break down, that the brain-workers among them frequently become insane, and that the hand-workers become enfeebled and diseased. This is the substance of statements made by Dr. J. R. Farre before a committee of the British House of Commons in 1832; by six hundred and forty-one medical men of London in a petition presented to Parliament in 1853; by Dr. Carpenter, the great physician and physiologist of England; by twenty-five physicians of the New Haven Medical Association; and by Drs. Thomas Sewall, Mussey, Harrison, Alden and

other eminent physicians of this country.\* Dr. Paul Niemeyer, professor of hygiene in Leipsic University, published in 1876 a prize essay on "Sunday Rest from a Sanitary Point of View." In this he argues strongly for a weekly day of rest as essential to the preservation of health. He says that, aside from all religious considerations, Sunday should be observed as a day of rest for the sake of its hygienic benefits. No sane man would disregard the testimony of an authority so eminent as Dr. Niemeyer.

But we are not limited to evidence which others have placed before the public. While preparing this book the writer addressed personal letters to a few of the eminent physicians of this country, asking for their opinion on this subject. Among the replies received were the following. The first is from Dr. Alonzo Clark, long recognized as standing among the very first of his profession in New York city, and ex-president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He writes, "I cheerfully give my testimony in favor of the Sabbath as a benevolent institution to all—brain-workers as well as others. I have in my own family a person in whose case the remittance

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\* Most of this testimony is presented at length by Gilfillan: "The Sabbath," pp. 173-183.



of labor on the Sabbath is almost a renewal of life. It is my belief that as much labor, mental as well as physical, can be accomplished in six days as in seven. There are men who can work seven days in a week and not impair their health, but at hard work the human frame generally gives way sooner or later."

The second is from Dr. William Pepper, provost of the University of Pennsylvania, and generally acknowledged to be at the head of his profession in Philadelphia. He says, "You ask my opinion as to the advantage of observing the weekly Sabbath as a means of maintaining good health. I have no hesitation in saying that it is my clear opinion that the regular observance of the Sabbath does tend to prolong life, to improve health, and to increase in quantity and quality the total work done by the individual. There are exceptional men who are able to apply themselves without such remissions to their labors, throughout a long life-time, without injury, but such exceptions do not invalidate the general rule I have stated. I must add that, in my judgment, the proper observance of the Sabbath, in order to secure the greatest physical, mental and moral good from it, involves much more than attendance on divine worship, with intervals of monotonous inaction. Provision should always

be made for healthful exercise of body, and for innocent and agreeable distraction of the mind." Dr. R. J. Levis, another eminent physician of the same city, writes, "I believe that, besides its moral influences, the observance of a weekly Sabbath is favorable to the maintenance of health. A weekly day of rest, with moral safeguards and restraints, is a blessing." Such testimony is not to be disregarded. It is based upon a careful study of man's physical constitution and upon observation of the results of different habits in the matter of work and rest. It goes to show that a weekly day of rest meets a real want in the nature of man.

The evidence we have derived from science and from the testimony of medical men is confirmed by experience. Experiments have been tried, the results of which have tended to establish the opinion we have advanced. Mill owners, manufacturers and contractors have tried working their men every day in the year. Then for some reason they have changed and granted the men the weekly day of rest. In the state of Pennsylvania there is a place known as "Sabbath Rest." The name was given to it from the fact that some years ago the blast-furnaces located there were owned and managed by a man who believed in observing the Lord's day, and who



would not allow them to be run in violation of the Sabbath. The almost universal opinion among iron-workers is that to let the furnaces lie idle over Sunday must result in great loss and inconvenience; hence they are usually kept going every day, and previous to the time mentioned these furnaces had not been an exception to the rule. But a gentleman who was well acquainted with the facts told the writer that, in this case, just as much iron was smelted as when the furnaces were run seven days in a week, that the men were healthier and happier, and that they were much better satisfied with their wages, though they did not receive quite as much.

It is related that two thousand men "were employed for years seven days in a week. To render them contented in giving up their right to the Sabbath as a day of rest, that birthright of the human family, they paid them double wages on that day—eight days' wages for seven days' work. But they could not keep them healthy or make them moral. Things went badly, and they changed their course, employed the men only six days in a week and allowed them to rest on the Sabbath. The consequence was that they did more work than ever before. This, the superintendent said, was owing to two causes—the demoralization of the people under the first system,

and their exhaustion of bodily strength, which was visible to the most casual observer.”\* Dr. Humphrey mentions a case which is still more striking. He says, “A contractor went on to the West with his hired men and teams to make a turnpike road. At first he paid no regard to the Sabbath, but continued his work as on other days. He soon found, however, that the ordinances of nature, no less than the moral law, were against him. His laborers became sickly, his teams grew poor and feeble, and he was fully convinced that more was lost than gained by working on the Lord’s day. So true is it that the Sabbath-day laborer, like the drunkard and the glutton, undermines his health, and prematurely hastens the infirmities of age and his exit from this world.”† “One of these experiments was made in a large flouring establishment. For a number of years the mills were worked seven days a week. The superintendent was then changed. He ordered the men to stop the works at eleven o’clock on Saturday night, and not to start them till one o’clock Monday morning, thus allowing a full Sabbath every week. And the same men during the year actually ground fifty thousand bushels more

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\* Permanent Sabbath Documents, No. 1, p. 33.

† Quoted by Gilfillan, p. 180.

than had ever been ground in a single year in that establishment before. The men having been permitted to cleanse themselves, put on their best apparel, rest from worldly business, go with their families to the house of God, and devote the Sabbath to its appropriate duties, were more healthy, punctual, moral and diligent. They lost less time in drinking, dissipation and quarrels. They were more clear-headed and whole-hearted; knew better how to do things and were more disposed to do them in the right way.”\* In every case where the experiment has been fairly tried, by bringing the two methods into contrast, it has been found that the men could do as much work in six days, with one of rest, as they had before done in seven, and that the work was less wearing upon them. One would naturally think that he could do more in seven days than in six, and so he could for one week, and perhaps for a year; but by the end of the year the balance would be on the other side, and the Sabbath-keeping man would have more years, for his life would be prolonged by his rest-days.

The longer these experiments are continued, the more striking becomes the contrast. The religious peculiarities of the Jews furnish us with

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\* Charles Elliott, “The Sabbath,” p. 18.

what amounts to an experiment on a vast scale. In Europe they are noted for the strictness with which they observe their Sabbath, while their Christian neighbors are very lax in observing Sunday. Many of the latter work seven days in a week, with no change except an occasional holiday. Now, it is a well-known fact, referred to by many writers, that the average life of the Jews is ten years longer than that of Christians in the same countries. It has also been noticed that in times of epidemic diseases, such as cholera, the Jews enjoy remarkable immunity from attack. These facts speak volumes in favor of the hygienic advantages of a weekly rest-day.

Light has been thrown on this subject in a very interesting way by experiments with those lower animals which man employs as his servants. It has been found that if they do not have their weekly day of rest, they are prematurely worn out. Two or three illustrations are all we can find room for. "A hundred and twenty horses were employed for years seven days in a week. But they became unhealthy, and finally died so fast that the owner thought it was too expensive, and put them on a six-days arrangement. After this he was not obliged to replenish them one fourth part as often as before. Instead of sinking continually, his horses came up again, and

lived longer than they could have done on the other plan. A manufacturing company which had been accustomed to carry their goods to market with their own teams kept them employed seven days in a week, as that was the time in which they could go to the market and return. But by permitting the teams to rest on the Sabbath, they found they could drive them the same distance in six days that they had formerly done in seven, and with the same keeping preserve them in better order.”\* The case of Bianconi, the great car or stage proprietor of Ireland, has become famous. At one time he owned fourteen hundred horses, and the result of his vast experience was that he would not allow one of them to be driven on Sunday. He said, “I can work a horse eight miles a day for six days in the week much better than I can six miles a day for seven days a week. By not working on Sunday I save at least twelve per cent.”† Those who undertake long journeys with domestic animals, such as emigrants to the West in this country used to take, find that they lose far more than they gain in speed by traveling seven days in a week.

Such cases are instructive for us, because man

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\* Charles Elliott, “The Sabbath,” p. 19.

† From a leaflet entitled “How to Get On.” See Gilfillan, p. 183, and Craft’s “Sabbath,” etc., p. 199.

is related in his physical nature to the lower animals. His body is subject to the same laws of waste and repair as the bodies of other animals. These experiments go to show that if man were a mere animal, he would still need the weekly Sabbath as a day of rest. But he is more than an animal, and for that reason is in greater need of a Sabbath even for the sake of his body. Every one knows how much a cheerful mind has to do with the preservation of the health and strength. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." In war, the men who endure the long marches and the exposure and who recover from wounds are the men who keep brave and hopeful hearts in their bosoms. No one can doubt that unceasing toil—toil relieved by no days of rest—breaks the spirits and renders the toilers despondent and gloomy. A traveller in France speaks of the "moroseness occasioned" among some of the laboring classes "by the want of a Sabbath." Low-spirited and despondent drudges, such as laborers must become when doomed to unbroken toil, lose their strength and are short-lived. The Sabbath, by affording a day of rest to which weary men can look forward with joy, and by diverting the mind from the irksome round of toil to social and religious privileges, adds enjoyment to life, and so preserves the health and strength



of the body. On this account alone it is necessary to that vast majority of mankind who must earn their bread by manual labor.

It is evident that the Sabbath is necessary to the physical welfare of man. Without it it is impossible for him to gain and preserve bodily health and vigor. Without these he can never reach the high destiny for which he was intended, but must remain the weak and degraded creature which he appears in many heathen lands. In man's physical constitution God has given promise of his purpose to establish a weekly Sabbath. The heathen, who have only the light of nature, have had a dim perception of its necessity. "Where the true religion has been unknown, it has always been found necessary to appoint, by some constituted authority, a certain number of holidays, which have often, even in heathen countries, exceeded, rarely anywhere have fallen short of, the number of God's instituted Sabbaths. The animal and mental, the bodily and spiritual natures of man alike demand them. Even Plato deemed the appointment of such days of so benign and gracious a tendency that he ascribed them to that pity which the gods have for mankind, born to painful labor, that they might have an ease and cessation from their toils. And what is this but an experimental testimony to the truth



of God's having ordered his work of creation with a view to the appointment of such an institution in providence, and to his wisdom and goodness in having done so? . . . It seems as if God, in the appointment of this law, had taken special precautions against the attempts which he foresaw would be made to get free of the institution, and that on this account he laid its foundations deep in the original framework and constitution of nature."\* In quoting these sentences from Prof. Fairbairn, we anticipate somewhat our conclusion, for at this stage of the argument we claim only that, since the Sabbath is necessary to man's physical welfare, it is probable that God has established it. A benevolent deity would not fail in revealing to us whatever it is necessary for us to know more fully than it can be learned from the light of nature. Whenever he creates a need he invariably follows it with the creation of a suitable supply. The promise of a Sabbath which he has thus written upon the constitution of things he will surely fulfill in his revelation to man.

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\* Fairbairn's "Typology," vol. ii. pp. 116-120.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SABBATH NECESSARY TO MAN'S INTELLECTUAL WELFARE.

“In the world there is nothing great but man ;  
In man there is nothing great but mind.”

THE favorite aphorism of Sir William Hamilton, which we have taken as a motto for this chapter, is not true unless the word “mind” is so used as to include all the faculties of the soul. The intellect is not the only great thing in man ; he has other faculties even more worthy of attention and admiration. And yet it would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the human intellect as a power in the world, or in its relation to the progress of the race. In the last chapter it was made to appear that man could do little without proper attention to his physical nature. We now go a step higher, and put forth the claim that he is dependent upon his intellectual powers not only for material progress, but also for advancement in morals and religion. It is by the intellect that the truths taught by nature are discovered, and even revealed truth must be apprehended by the intellect before it can affect

the heart and life. There could be no progress for a race of idiots, even if it were possible to suppose them endowed with physical perfection and moral sensibility.

Consider the greatness and glory of the human intellect as they are manifested in its intrinsic nature, its grand achievements and its limitless possibilities. Is it conceivable that God would create anything so noble as the human intellect and not make provision for its proper development? And besides its intrinsic value, we must remember that it is at the foundation of all social, moral and religious progress, both for the individual and the race. If men are placed in such conditions that their minds cannot be cultivated, they must forever remain in degradation. It must not be supposed that the Creator has intended that only a few minds shall be cultivated. While it is true that the great thinkers of the world are few, and that most of the thinking has been done by those who were thus endowed above their fellows, it does not follow that any mind should be left without some measure of cultivation. God has given intellects to all men, and while they differ much in power, it is not only the inalienable right of all to enjoy the means of growth, but is an absolute necessity to the elevation of the race.

Now the one means by which the mind grows is exercise. Men must think, if their thinking powers are to be developed. Time and opportunity must be given for the exercise of their minds, or they will inevitably fall into stagnation. Perception, memory, imagination, reason, must all be exercised or they will become dormant. They must have proper objects on which to act, time in which to act and freedom from distraction while acting.

How are these conditions to be secured for men who labor with their hands? Let us remember that these constitute, and must ever constitute, the great majority of the race. Hence, in discussing a question like this, they are the first to be considered. Let us suppose that they are compelled to work every day; what must be their mental condition? In most cases no time could be procured for mental improvement; but even if there were time, there would be no strength. Every one who has had experience knows that it is impossible to use the mind to any good purpose when the body is exhausted with manual toil. Labor is honorable, but the inevitable tendency of protracted and exhausting labor is to dull the mental faculties. A human being has only a limited amount of force or energy, and if it is all expended in physical labor, nothing is left

with which to carry on mental exercises. This is often forgotten. Persons who have had no experience sometimes wonder why laboring men do not use their evenings for mental improvement. The fact is that in most cases it is simply impossible; after their day's work is done they have not the requisite strength and energy. This is certain to be the case with those who are doomed to toil continuously day after day. They will soon become so enfeebled that every particle of their force will be exhausted in performing their daily round of toil. The inevitable consequence of unceasing toil is intellectual degradation. Under such conditions men will become ignorant, stupid and brutish. Their minds will be dwarfed and their sensibilities blunted, until they are little better than beasts of burden. The noble temple of the intellect, which our Maker has planned for every man, is either never built or soon becomes a shattered and desolate ruin.

This is the outlook for the mass of mankind unless a portion of their time can be redeemed from toil and employed in exercises which are adapted to the cultivation of their mental powers. No one can believe that it is or ever has been the divine intention to doom intelligent creatures to such a life. We are created for something better than a life that crushes the intellect and leaves

only a jaded animal. Here, then, is a great want which can be supplied only by having a part of the time left free from ordinary labor.

We claim that this want is met in the institution of a weekly Sabbath. In this, two necessary provisions are made. In the first place, sufficient time is given for study and thought, so that one who uses it well may have a richly-stored mind and well-developed intellectual powers. This time should be so free from toil, and even from its physical effects, that the hardest worker will have time to devote to intellectual pursuits. One day in seven does not seem much for such a purpose, but in reality it is a great deal. Suppose a man to live seventy years, and to be engaged in manual labor or in business from his fourteenth year. During those fifty-six years of toil, his Sabbaths would amount, in the aggregate, to eight years. If he had a fair education for a boy of his age at fourteen, eight years more for study and thought would enable him to make great mental progress. Of course, he could not be a specialist in any department of investigation, but he could be a well-informed and intelligent man.

In the second place, the Sabbath furnishes means for intellectual improvement through the ministrations of the pulpit and the instruction of the Sabbath-school. Here the grandest themes,



those best calculated to enlarge the mind, to quicken the perceptions, to strengthen the reason and to inspire the imagination, are discussed. Relative to the influence of pulpit instruction, Dr. Spring says: "Many a sleeping genius, reposing within the curtains of its own unconscious powers, has been awakened to hope and action by the instructions of the sanctuary. It were a curious and not unprofitable inquiry to institute, How many well-educated men in Christian lands have received the first impulse and suggestion in their lofty career from the instructions of the Sabbath?"\* In this country these are supplemented by books and periodicals almost without number, so cheap that they are within reach of any industrious man who really desires them.

It will be objected that men who have the Sabbath do not use it or any part of it for mental improvement; that most of them prefer to spend it either in absolute idleness or in seeking amusement. This may be true, but it has no relation to the present discussion. We are not here discussing the proper method of observing the Sabbath; we are simply trying to show that days of cessation from ordinary toil are absolutely necessary to the proper development of the mind. If

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\* Quoted in "The Sabbath for Man," p. 225.



men have the days and will not use them rightly, it is only one instance in many of the way in which they disregard their privileges and abuse their blessings. The value of the opportunity is not diminished, and it does not follow that it should be taken away from those who know how to use it.

So far we have discussed the subject chiefly in its relation to those engaged in manual labor. What has been said of them applies with equal force to men engaged in most kinds of business. The farmer, the tradesman, the railroad employe, the skilled mechanic, and others who combine some measure of mental activity with their manual toil, have exactly the same need of time for intellectual improvement. Ordinarily the mental exercise required in their business develops but one faculty, and that perhaps not the highest. They may be, and often are, more devoid of general intelligence and mental breadth than the common laborer or the factory operative. Their hours of work are longer, and their absorption in business more complete. Merchants, bankers, lawyers, physicians, ministers, teachers, officers of the great corporations, and others whose work is almost wholly mental, need the Sabbath more for physical than for intellectual reasons. They can usually command time for any line of study

which they choose to follow. And yet there can be no doubt that their minds are made broader and are better developed by the complete change of occupation for which the Sabbath affords opportunity. That is the true rest of the mind. In our waking hours it never ceases its activity, but it needs change. If it does not have it, if it is kept continually upon the strain in one direction, the effects are disastrous. These are, no doubt, the immediate results of physical derangement; but as they are often manifested through the mind, we may speak of them in this connection. Only a few of the great number of facts at hand can be referred to.

Sir David Wilkie, the celebrated painter, said that "those artists who wrought on Sunday were soon disqualified from working at all." The editor of the London *Standard*, after many years of observation among intellectual workers, said, "We never knew a man work seven days a week who did not kill himself or kill his mind."\* The Rev. J. Scott, of Hull, England, in a discourse on Wilberforce said, "I have heard him assert that he never could have sustained the labor and stretch of mind required in his early political life, if it had not been for the rest of the Sabbaths; and

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\* See Gilfillan, p. 181.

that he could name several of his contemporaries in the vortex of political cares, whose minds had actually given way under the stress of intellectual labor, so as to bring on a premature death, or the still more dreadful catastrophe of insanity and suicide, who, humanly speaking, might have been preserved in health if they would have but conscientiously observed the Sabbath." Dr. Carpenter, to whom we have referred in the previous chapter, said in a letter to a friend, "My own experience is very strong as to the importance of the complete rest and change of thought once in the week."\* Dr. Farre, in his report on the observance of the Sabbath, bore still stronger testimony to the value of the weekly rest for the mind.† "A distinguished merchant, who for twenty years did a vast amount of business, remarked to Dr. Edwards, 'Had it not been for the Sabbath I should no doubt have been a maniac long ago.' This was mentioned in a company of merchants, when one remarked, 'That is the case exactly with Mr. ——. He is one of our greatest importers. He used to say that the Sabbath was the best day in the week to plan successful voyages, showing that his mind had no Sabbath. He

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\* Woolwich Lectures on the Sabbath, p. 53.

† See Report, p. 119.

has been in the insane hospital for years, and will probably die there.'” Bearing directly upon this point is the curious and somewhat startling fact that among those nations of Europe where the Lord’s day is least observed, the Sabbath-keeping Jews are gaining and holding far more than their share of the positions which require intellectual vigor. In Germany they control ninety per cent. of the newspapers; a large proportion of the teachers, lawyers and physicians are Jews; they are surpassing all others in the acquisition of wealth; and they are largely represented in the German Parliament. In France there is the same state of things in respect to intellectual pursuits, while the influence of the Jews in the government is much greater than in Germany.\* Who can doubt that their power to outstrip others in the race for intellectual pre-eminence is in part due to their habit of keeping a weekly Sabbath? At any rate they are not having the same success in England and America, where the Lord’s day is more generally observed.

The rest and change which the Sabbath brings to brain-workers are absolutely essential to the health of the mind. While those who labor with

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\* See “The Sabbath for Man,” p. 146, and Appendix 35 for authorities.

their hands need to cease from their ordinary toil in order that they may get time and opportunity to exercise their minds; those who do mental work need to cease from it that their minds may be rested by a complete change of occupation. The day of rest is equally essential to the welfare of both. It is more than expedient to observe it. If the minds of men are to be what God intended them to be, this weekly rest-day is a necessity. We cannot believe that a good and benevolent Creator would leave this noble part of our nature, created in his own image, without adequate provision for its development. May we not reasonably infer that he has appointed a Sabbath, since it is found to be so necessary to our intellectual welfare?

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SABBATH NECESSARY TO MAN'S MORAL AND RELIGIOUS WELFARE.

We know and, what is better, we feel inwardly that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort.—BURKE.

Human happiness has no perfect security but freedom ; freedom none but virtue ; virtue none but knowledge ; and neither freedom nor virtue nor knowledge has any vigor or immortal hope, except in the principles of the Christian faith and in the sanctions of the Christian religion.—JOSIAH QUINCY.

MAN is a religious being. He feels himself to be related in some way to God—the Creator, Preserver and Sovereign of the universe. Religion is the recognition and expression of our obligation to worship and obey the supreme Being. This feeling is one of the deepest instincts of our nature. It is the determining element of human character. It persists in spite of every influence calculated to destroy it. It manifests itself on every page of human history. Whatever touches the religious nature arouses the bitterest hatred or the strongest enthusiasm. Men never hate one another as they do when their religious opinions clash. For proof of this, note the attitude of the Jews toward Christ, and



the religious wars, and the persecutions of opposing sects. So strong is this feeling that it overrides every sentiment of justice or pity, and men have hated and slaughtered one another in the name of incarnate love. On the other hand, men will do more in order to be true to their religious feeling than for any other purpose. They have fought harder, paid more dearly, and suffered more in order to maintain their religious convictions than to gain any other end. All this shows, not that religion is a bad or worthless thing, but that the religious feeling is the strongest instinct of our nature. It is an essential element in the character of a human being. It is the distinguishing mark which, more than anything else, separates man from all other earthly creatures. It is a universal feeling. Men of every age and every nation and of every grade of civilization manifest it. They all believe in the existence of a being or beings different from themselves, more powerful and better or worse. They believe in a future life and another world than this. They believe that that world and that life have some sort of connection with the present. They feel that spiritual beings exercise some sort of control over the affairs of men and in some way shape their destiny. Thus they all have worship, and all try to please their divinities. The forms



in which the religious feeling manifests itself are often rude and pitiaibly grotesque ; for the understanding is darkened, the judgment perverted and the heart corrupted. But being everywhere manifested proves it to be a part of universal human nature. It belongs to the very nature of man. One who has no religion is something less or something worse than a man. Any provision for man's deepest needs, any system of training which is to bring him to the highest state of development, must not overlook his religious nature.

Man is also a moral being. By this we mean that there is in him an intuition of right and wrong. He is not able to judge correctly the moral quality of every action and every state of mind. In special cases his judgment is as likely to be erroneous as true. Here he is almost wholly dependent upon training and surroundings, and his opinions are simply conventional. But everywhere and always he does know that there is an eternal and indestructible difference between right and wrong. Call it what you will—conscience, moral sense or instinct—there is something within him which approves certain courses of conduct, and which condemns others, because they seem to him right or wrong. Left to himself he brings actions to this test sooner

than to the test of expediency or of personal advantage. It is the basis of all moral instruction, but is not dependent upon it. It exists independently of antecedents or training or surroundings. The only effect which instruction can have upon this moral sense is so to enlighten the judgment as to make it capable of applying it wisely in the conduct of life. This sense of right and wrong is universal, as we have already hinted. No race of men has ever been found who do not possess it in some rudimentary form. Its strength and its universality show that it is an essential part of universal human nature. No one questions the importance of considering it in any system of training or education for man. Even those philosophers who deny the reality of the religious instinct, and say that religion is a source of injury to man, admit the necessity of moral training. They cannot help seeing that upon the moral character of man more than upon anything else depend his earthly happiness and the welfare of society. Herbert Spencer finds fault with our present systems of education because they take too little account of the moral character, and strongly maintains that the development of this should be the aim of all education.\*

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\* "Education," chap. iii.

In this view he is undoubtedly correct, though we cannot agree with him in his disregard of the religious instinct.

Religion and morality cannot be altogether separated. It is true that morality relates to our conduct as it affects directly our fellow men, while religion is a matter between man and his God; and for this reason many have considered them as independent of each other. We have undertaken to treat them both in this chapter because we believe them to be inseparable. There may be a kind of morality without religion. Considerations of expediency would lead men to treat one another with justice and perhaps with kindness, and would deter them from the infliction of self-injury. But that is certainly a superficial view which identifies expediency or enlightened selfishness with morality. It throws out of account altogether the instinctive sense of right and wrong. It ignores the fact that men feel guilty or innocent according to the quality of their actions and not according to their results. That morality must be of a low order which does not recognize a sense of obligation higher than that which we feel toward ourselves and our fellow men.

That religion cannot be rightly separated from morality is admitted by all. That it has often

been so separated in the history of mankind does not alter the fact that it ought not to be. Religion divorced from morality is only a hideous shadow of true religion. It is a monstrous perversion of the religious instinct. It is religion touching only one side of man's nature, and that the side most easily misled and corrupted. It is putting it wholly in the sphere of the emotions and the imagination, and leaving out of account the will and the conscience. It is denying the right of that which was meant to govern the conduct to have anything to do with the conduct. For our obligation to God covers and absorbs all other obligations. It does not obliterate but strengthens them. When a man rightly appreciates his obligations to God, he feels bound to do right in every relation in life. He sees in himself and in his fellow men creations of God whose highest welfare he is bound to consider. He serves God by serving his creatures. He knows that every sin against them is a sin against God. Thus religion and morality are inseparable.

Man derives his chief importance from the possession of a religious nature. His sense of right and wrong, his feeling that there is a God whom he must worship and obey, and the fore-gleams of immortality which come to him, all indicate for him a nobler destiny than any other earthly being

can claim. These spiritual faculties separate him from the brute creation by a wide chasm. The lower animals may have intellect, they show some forms of sensibility, they seem even to will, but they have never, in any instance, felt "the power of the world to come." When man, therefore, ignores his religious nature he ignores his crown and glory. To care alone for the body is to reduce himself to the level of other animals. To train the intellect alone puts him in the same line with educated pigs and trained dogs, though we will grant that he is at the head of the line. The grandest possibilities of man lie in the cultivation of his religious nature. This is true for two reasons besides the one already mentioned: First, because his usefulness to his fellow men and his happiness in this life depend more upon what he is religiously and morally than upon anything else. Justice, truth and purity, mercy, love and kindness practiced toward others, peace in the heart and hope for the future,—these are all the outgrowth of true religion. Second, because man's eternal destiny is wrapped up in the possibilities of his religious nature. In a universe under moral law nothing else could determine it. Not physical perfection, not intellectual breadth and power, but faith in God and love for man, will secure immortal glory.

Short-sighted and foolish beyond all description is any system of training which neglects the religious nature of man. Without this he can be only partially fitted for his present life, and is altogether unfitted for the life to come. Taking into account the whole sweep of his destiny, to attempt to prepare him for it without religious training would be like preparing a carrier-pigeon for his work by cutting off his wings, or like making one a first-class athlete by compelling him to lie upon his back until his muscles were withered and flabby.

Now, we hold that the religious training of man is utterly impossible without the Sabbath. In a world of sin, the inevitable tendency of constant occupation with earthly affairs is to make men forget God and their own eternal destiny. This hardly needs proof; the mere statement of it is enough to secure its acceptance. It is in the nature of things that it should be so, and it has been the unvarying experience of those who have tried it. If the knowledge of God is to be kept alive among men, and if they are to perform their duties to him, a day must be set apart for the purpose. Their thoughts must be called off from their ordinary avocations, and time must be given for religious instruction and the exercises of worship.



Let us look at these thoughts a little longer, taking them one by one. The Sabbath itself is a necessary reminder of the fact that there is a God, that he rules in heaven and in earth, that we are the creatures of his hand and the objects of his care, that we are under his government and accountable to him, that we are transgressors of his law and exposed to his wrath but that he has offered us salvation in Christ, and that we shall at last be assigned by him an eternal destiny according to the deeds done in the body. When offices and shops are closed, when clattering machinery and clanging hammers are still, when the plow stands in the furrow or the reaper in the field, and when beasts of burden rest in their stalls, men ask what it means. They get their answer in the statement that it is God's day, the day on which to look after the interests of the soul. Thus God and eternity are kept before them in the day itself.

Again, it is necessary to the maintenance of religion in the soul that more time should be given to meditation upon the truths of God and the duties of life than can be secured in the busy whirl of secular occupation. The Sabbath furnishes opportunity for thought upon God, life, death, and duty, which would otherwise be denied to most men. Just as men working in the poison-



ous gases of a deep well must, at frequent intervals, come to the surface for fresh air, so must we who are immersed in secular toil have our Sabbath during which we may ascend to higher regions and breathe the air of heaven. Without such seasons there can be no religious life.

Again, if religion is to be maintained among men, they must gather for public worship and religious instruction. The great mass of men must have leaders and teachers in religion as in other things—men who are set apart to the work of studying God's word in order that they may teach others. This necessity for public worship and religious instruction has always been conceded. According to the famous saying of Montalembert, "there can be no religion without worship and no worship without Sunday." It is everywhere admitted that without time set apart for this purpose, true religion would die off the face of the earth, and men would become heathen and barbarians. Dr. Macleod expressed the common sentiment of thoughtful Christians when he said, "It is not too much to say that without the Sunday the Church of Christ could not, as a visible society, exist on the earth." Wherever public worship and religious instruction cease, having once prevailed in a community, there is a speedy decline of godliness and morality. But how are

they to be maintained, if men work all days alike? What conceivable method of securing them is there except for men to cease from their ordinary work on certain appointed days and come together for these purposes? How otherwise could they agree when to meet, or get time for meeting?

Again, these meetings for instruction and worship should come at regular and frequent intervals. If they come too rarely, the effect of one is lost before another arrives. If they come irregularly, there would be no general agreement as to the time. Besides, we need the power of habit to keep us up to the mark in the performance of religious duties.

For these and other reasons which might be mentioned, the Sabbath is a necessity to the religious and moral welfare of man. A special word may be said here with regard to its moral influence. It is sometimes claimed that the Sabbath has a *direct* influence in keeping men moral, and that the violation of it tends to gross immorality and often to crime. In proof of this, numerous instances are given of criminals who have stated that they entered upon the downward road by breaking the Sabbath. This may have been true in every case, and yet it proves nothing concerning the moral influence of the

Sabbath. It simply proves, as F. W. Robertson has pointed out\* and as every one ought to have seen for himself, that they had been taught to believe that Sabbath-breaking was a sin, and so when they broke the Sabbath they also impaired their power to resist evil, as one always does by an act he feels to be wrong. So train a child that he believes dancing to be a sin and he will, if he dances, do violence to his conscience and weaken his moral character. An act in itself perfectly innocent might thus be spoken of by a criminal as his first sin. If he thought it wrong it would be a sin to him, but that proves nothing as to the wisdom or justice of the law which he violated. We desire to establish nothing by false arguments. If there were no Sabbath, it does not follow that everybody would plunge headlong into crime. If there were no law against it, working every day in seven would not be immoral, would hurt no one's conscience and would not tend directly to the production of crime. We believe that the moral influence of the Sabbath is salutary and powerful, but we believe that it comes from what is done on that day, and not from what men abstain from doing. It comes through the influence of worship and religious

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\* Sermons, second series, p. 210.

instruction. Men need to be instructed in morals. Joseph Cook forcibly asks, "How can men be made honest without a time set apart for religious culture?"\* Not long ago Dr. G. D. Boardman, of Philadelphia, suggested† the desirability of establishing in that city a Lectureship of Practical Morals, for the better instruction of the people in the duties of business and social life. No one doubted the need of it or its probable utility, but there is a general feeling that such a work can best be done in the pulpit. It is done there. No one can preach a complete gospel who does not instruct men in everything that relates to conduct. Thus the Sabbath, through the opportunity which it alone affords for religious and moral instruction, is a necessity to the religious nature of man. Because we believe that a true system of morality depends upon religion, we hold that the Sabbath is a necessity also to his moral welfare. The direct results of being without a Sabbath would be that the great mass of mankind would be without proper instruction concerning their moral obligations, and without sufficient incentive to fulfill them when known. Hence neither religion nor a pure morality could be sustained

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\* Boston Monday Lectures, "Biology," p. 162.

† Article in *National Baptist*.

among men without this institution. As one has forcibly said, "you might as well put out the sun and think to enlighten the world with tapers, destroy the attraction of gravitation and think to wield the universe by human powers, as to extinguish the moral illumination of the Sabbath, and break this glorious main-spring of the moral government of God," and yet try to maintain religion and morality upon the earth.\*

Is it of any importance that they should be maintained? The question answers itself. Aside from all regard for man's present welfare, it is supremely important that he should be prepared for the future life. He is to live forever, and whether he shall be a lost, depraved, degraded and miserable being, or a being of goodness and power and glory and joy unspeakable, depends upon his religious and moral character in this life. Can we believe that God, who created him in his own image in order that men might have fellowship with him, who created him for a spiritual life and eternal glory, who made him so that he reaches his true destiny only in worshipping and obeying God—can we believe that he would leave man without adequate provision for his spiritual and moral needs?

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\* Quoted by Webster in his speech on the Girard will case.

Does God create a delicate and costly piece of workmanship simply to see it perish? But, in the present order of things, we cannot see how these wants of man's nature can be met without the time and opportunity for religious instruction and worship which are afforded by the weekly Sabbath. To the correctness of this position even those who would destroy the Sabbath bear un-conscious testimony, for they are invariably those who would destroy religion. Voltaire said, "There is no hope of destroying the Christian religion as long as the Christian Sabbath is acknowledged and kept by men as a sacred day." Infidels and atheists feel that if the Sabbath can be obliterated, one step, at least, will be taken toward the accomplishment of their main object. Their opinion is well founded. Conversely, since we have shown that man is a religious being, that religion is essential to his perfect development as a man and is the only means by which his eternal welfare can be secured, we have established the necessity of the Sabbath.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE SABBATH NECESSARY TO MAN'S SOCIAL WELFARE.

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?—MAL. 2: 10.

MAN is not an isolated being. He cannot reach his highest development nor can he fulfill his mission unless he is associated with others of his own kind. "It is not good to be alone." To preserve his very existence he must associate with others in the family relation. The law which binds him to those outside of his family is almost as inexorable. Progress is impossible without the formation of nations and communities. Those nations which have been the most firmly compacted, those in which the national feeling has been strongest, have made the most rapid advancement and have done the most in the world.

There is no need to develop this thought, and we may pass at once to the discussion of the bearing of the Sabbath upon man's social welfare. Here we may consider some things which affect him as an individual, but which especially concern his relations to others. Cleanliness of person



and neatness of dress may be described as personal virtues, but because of our imitative tendency—because of the power of fashion—they belong to this part of our subject. They have an important relation to health, to refinement of manners, to self-respect, to temperance and to chastity. Dirt and filth not only accompany, but lead to, barbarism and vice. Cleanliness among those who live in whole or in part by manual toil is directly promoted by the observance of the Sabbath. Men who labor continually at that which soils the clothing and dirties the person soon come to see no reason for trying to be neat and clean, since they must so soon return to their work. But the Sabbath, affording both a respite from toil and an opportunity for family and social intercourse, offers a strong inducement to the working man to wash himself and change his clothing. If you can get a man to do this once a week, you have done much to promote his improvement in manners and morals. Then if you can get him to assemble for the worship of God with others who have prepared themselves in the same way, you have done more. Aside from the religious influence of Sabbath-keeping and church-going, the mere habit among a people of going out to meet one another, clean washed and well dressed, is of incalculable

value. It has a humanizing, refining, elevating tendency. The influence of it will go with them all the following week. They cannot quite fall back to the same brutish indifference to neatness and good manners that would otherwise characterize them. Thus the Sabbath is a frequently-recurring bright spot in lives that would otherwise be all dark.

Again, the Sabbath exerts a salutary influence upon the family life. Marriage and the Sabbath were given to man in Eden, and they seem to be so related that one cannot be preserved in its purity and sacredness without the other. It is a striking fact that in Sabbathless countries and in countries where the Lord's day is little regarded, free divorces or crimes against the marriage law, or both, prevail to an alarming extent. This is due in part to the absence of the moral restraints of the Sabbath, and in part to the fact that without the leisure afforded by the Lord's day for the cultivation of family affection, it is hardly possible for husband and wife to retain right relations to each other. Dr. Lowe, an eminent physician of Berlin, in a speech in the German Parliament on a bill to prevent employers from compelling their workmen to work on Sunday, said, "I have had occasion in my career as a physician to visit more than nine thousand workmen who worked on Sun-

days in their shops or at their homes, and I have it on proof that Sunday labor has the most disastrous effect. In their homes slovenliness and discord reign; the life of the wine-shop has supplanted the family life.”\*

Men who work hard, either at manual labor or in business, see very little of their families. A tradesman told the writer that often a whole week passed when he did not see his children awake, though he slept under the same roof with them. He went away in the morning before they were up, ate his dinner down town, and did not return until they were in bed. Perhaps not many cases are so bad as this; but most busy men see very little of their families during the week. When a man, about to retire from business, was asked what he intended to do, he replied, “I am going to get acquainted with my wife and children.” It ought not to require much discussion to convince any one that the head of a family owes something more to its members than to provide them with shelter, raiment and food. He is responsible for their intellectual, moral and religious welfare. To fulfill this obligation he must know them well, making a careful study of each child; he must superintend their school life; and

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\* Quoted by Crafts, “The Sabbath for Man,” p. 230.

he must himself instruct them in moral and religious duties. How shall he get time for these things in this busy world? Plainly a large part of it must be obtained on the Lord's day, when ordinary toil can be laid aside. Here the Sabbath meets a great want and touches human society at the very core of its life. It should be, and may be, a healing touch, and blessed is that people where the Lord's day is thus used; for if the family, which is the heart of society, is right, all else will soon be right.

Again, the Sabbath is necessary to prevent the inordinate growth of class distinctions. When the laboring man washes himself clean and puts on his best clothes, he is for the nonce, outwardly at least, on the same level with the rich man or the professional man who dresses alike on all days. The broad mark which distinguishes them as they pass in the streets on working days, on the Lord's day is obliterated. And then, if they go to the house of God, they meet there as equals. "The rich and poor meet together;" and both feel that "the Lord *is* the maker of them all." If they meet in the spirit which the day was intended to promote, the rich will be made humble and sympathetic, while the poor will learn a lesson of self-respect. If the day were thus kept by all, we should soon hear little of the conflict

between labor and capital—of the hatred and jealousy on one side and of the contempt and distrust and oppression on the other which now exist.

In this connection a word may be said on a related subject. The Sabbath, rightly observed, protects the poor man from the greed and oppression of the rich and powerful. If it were not for this, laboring men would be compelled to toil all days in the week, whenever it suited the interests of their employers. That this is true may be seen in the action of railroad corporations and horse-car companies at the present time. When labor is plenty men are at the mercy of their employers, and many of the latter would force Sunday work upon all in their employ, if it were profitable and any reasonable excuse could be found for doing it.\* In the majority of cases no more wages would be paid for seven days' work than for six. As John Stuart Mill, a man who had looked carefully into the subject, said of a special class, "Operatives are perfectly right in thinking that if all worked Sunday, seven days' work would have to be given for six days' wages."†

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\* In proof of this assertion see the facts collected and published in the documents of the New York and Philadelphia Sabbath Associations.

† Essay "On Liberty," p. 155.

Even those who oppose the religious observance of the Lord's day see this danger, and infidels and free-thinkers demand that the right of the working man to one day in seven for rest and recreation shall be secured by law. There is especial need for such a demand in this country, where the greed for wealth, which is such a universal and absorbing passion, would certainly impel capitalists to rob employes of their weekly day of rest, if it were not secured to them by law. But it is vain to hope that working men can retain Sunday as a day of rest if its religious sanctions are destroyed. In Germany, in France, and in other countries where Sunday is a holiday, the poor have no day of rest. Mary Gordon, writing from Germany to *The Advance* of Chicago, after giving a multitude of facts to sustain her assertion says, "We believe it vain to think of introducing the diversions of the European Sabbath without its labor. Once take away the sacredness of Sunday, and you only open another twenty-four hours to the avarice and cupidity of man. This has been the unfailing result both in Catholic and Protestant countries; even laws to the contrary are of no avail." On the strength of abundant evidence from many countries, Rev. W. F. Crafts, who quotes the above, says, "Those who will not have the Sabbath as a holy day can-



not have it long as a rest day. When the Sabbath is not made a day of prayer, but of play, it soon becomes to the poor a day of toil.”\* This has been very forcibly put by S. D. Waddy, a member of the British Parliament, who says, “Let Sunday once come to be used by the nation generally for amusements, and the collar of work will be fastened as tightly around the necks of the working men on Sundays as on any other day.” If the working man would have his weekly day of rest, let him beware how he disturbs its religious sanctions. He should take all possible pains to preserve it, for since he would get no more for six days’ work than for seven, it is to him clear gain. It is almost the only means he has of preventing himself from sinking to the level of a beast of burden. It is the one day on which he may assert his equality with the rich, having earned the right to rest; his one protection against the oppression of greed; his one means of improving his mind and heart.

There are certain duties which men owe to one another which are best performed on the Lord’s day—which, indeed, are not likely to be performed upon other days. Such are those deeds of kindness by which the brotherhood of man is

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\* “The Sabbath for Man,” pp. 134–151.



best expressed, and which tend to unite closely the different members of society. On this day, the ignorant, especially those ignorant of religious truth, may be instructed by those who have had better opportunities of learning, the sick may be visited by the well, the afflicted may be comforted by the sympathetic, the poor may be fed by the bounty of the rich; in a word, those works which our Saviour describes as expressing the spirit which the Lord will approve at the judgment may be performed. They are not to be limited to this day, but they are especially appropriate to it. This subject belongs to the discussion of the proper method of observing the Lord's day, but we allude to it here in order to show that such a day is necessary for the fullest expression and consequent cultivation of the feeling which must bind men together in society. Rightly observed, this day is the best antidote to that selfishness and self-seeking which drives the members of society asunder or makes them mutually destructive. Other days are devoted mainly to the pursuit of personal advantage, and if all were alike devoted to this purpose how hard and selfish men would become! The Sabbath is the day on which men are to devote themselves to the good of others, and thus it becomes the fostering parent of that social sympathy the cul-

tivation of which is so necessary to the welfare of the race.

It is not necessary to speak at length of the salutary influence of the Sabbath upon communities and nations. These are made up of individuals, and must have the character given them by their members. If the people of a country are strong, intelligent, virtuous and God-fearing, the nation which they constitute will have these characteristics. In showing the necessity of the Sabbath to individuals and describing its influence upon them, we have shown what it will do for a people or a nation. Illustrations of its influence are abundant. Two communities, side by side, with other conditions similar or exactly the same, one of which observed the Sabbath while the other did not, have shown marked differences in moral character, intelligence and temporal prosperity. Let one of these cases serve as a type of many others. In New Hampshire there were two communities, one consisting of five families, the other of six. There was no great difference in the outward circumstances of the two except that the former was about three miles further away from a church than the latter. The five families kept the Sabbath with great care, abstaining from all secular work and worldly amusement on Sunday, and always attending church. They were

sometimes jeered at by their Sabbath-breaking neighbors for their puritanical habits, but they went on doing what they believed to be their duty. The six families of the other neighborhood, when they did not work, spent Sunday in visiting from house to house and in out-of-door sports, such as fishing, ball-playing, hunting and riding. None of them ever went to church. What were the results? Before the third generation had passed away the two neighborhoods presented a most striking contrast. All those descended from the five families were enjoying peace and prosperity. Only two out of the whole number were grossly immoral. Most of them were members of a Christian church and adorned their profession. Several were officers of churches, some were ministers of the gospel, and one was a missionary to China. No divorce or separation of husband and wife except by death ever occurred among them. Those who remained in their native place maintained the principles of their ancestors and were prospered in worldly affairs; while a colony which went out from them formed a similar community in the West. How was it with the six families who paid no heed to the Lord's day? Five of these families were broken up by the separation of husband and wife, and the other by the father becoming a thief

and running away. Eight or nine of the parents became drunkards, one died by his own hand and all came to poverty. Of the forty-five descendants, twenty were notorious drunkards, jockeys or gamblers. At different times four or five were in state's prison. One was killed in a duel. Some, going to sea or entering the army, were never afterward heard from by their friends. Some died in almshouses. Of the whole number only one became a Christian, and he after spending his youth in wickedness and dissipation.\* Other causes besides the neglect of the Lord's day on the one hand and the observance of it on the other contributed to the production of this remarkable contrast; but who can doubt that, if the six families had kept the Sabbath as did the five families, they would have been saved from vice and the disasters which vicious habits brought upon them? Would not the proper sanctification of that day have made it impossible for them to use the other days as they did? Here, then, we have a remarkable illustration of the value to a community of Sabbath-keeping.

Those nations which have most carefully observed the Lord's day have distanced their com-

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\* This account was written by a member of the Sabbath-keeping community, and was first published, I believe, in the *Puritan Recorder*.

petitors in the race for wealth and power. England and the United States owe much of their greatness to this observance. Contrast them with Italy, Spain and Mexico, where the Sabbath is little regarded. Though this is not the only cause for the difference, it must be reckoned among the most potent. So great an authority upon political economy as Adam Smith said, "The Sabbath as a political institution is of inestimable value, independently of its claims to divine authority."\* The reason for this opinion is not far to seek. The observance of the Sabbath fosters the elements of national greatness. Says Blackstone, "The keeping one day in seven holy, as a means of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to the state, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes, by the help of conversation and society, the manners of the lower classes, which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit. It enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness; it imprints upon the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God so necessary to make them good citizens, but which yet

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\* Quoted in Chambers' "Life of Sir John Sinclair."

may be worn out and defaced by an unremitted continuance of labor without any stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker.”\* There can be no doubt that, aside from the moral results, it is economical for a people to keep the Sabbath. But moral character and temporal prosperity cannot be separated. Industry, economy, temperance and intelligence are the bases of wealth, and these cannot co-exist with vice. It is a matter of common observation that when a community becomes morally degraded, it soon becomes poor. The increase of vice in any neighborhood diminishes the value of property already existing. The only assurance which a nation has of continued prosperity is in the health, virtue and intelligence of its people. If the Sabbath is necessary to the preservation of these, it is necessary to national existence. On this point we may quote the well-known words of Lord Macaulay: “Man! man! this is the great creator of wealth. The difference between the soil of Campania and Spitzbergen is insignificant compared with the difference presented by two countries, the one inhabited by men full of moral and physical vigor, the other by beings plunged in intellectual decrepitude. Hence it is that we

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\* “Commentaries,” bk. iv. ch. 4.



are not impoverished but on the contrary enriched by this seventh day, which we have for so many years devoted to rest. This day is not lost. While the machinery is stopped, while the car rests on the road, while the treasury is silent, while the smoke ceases to rise from the chimney of the factory, the nation enriches itself none the less than during the working days of the week. Man, the machine of all machines, the one by the side of which all the inventions of the Wattses and the Arkwrights are as nothing, is recuperating and gaining strength so well that on Monday he returns to his work with his mind clearer, with more courage for his work and with renewed vigor. I will never believe that that which renders a people stronger, wiser and better can ever turn to its impoverishment."\*. In confirmation of the truth of these words, we may quote the statement of Rev. George T. Washburn, in a letter from India. As the result of extended observation he says, "There is not a non-Sabbath-keeping nation that is not abjectly poor."† In a subsequent chapter‡ we shall consider the relations of the Sabbath to free institutions and national prosperity. Many statesmen and political

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\* Speech in Parliament on the Ten-hour Law.

† "The Sabbath for Man," p. 221.

‡ Chapter XV.

economists agree in the opinion that the highest form of government cannot be maintained without it.

The Sabbath, then, is a necessity to man's social welfare. While nations and communities may exist without it, they cannot reach their ideal state. But as man is a social being and cannot reach his highest development without being congregated with his fellows, this is another proof that the Sabbath is necessary to man. On every side of his nature, the physical, the intellectual, the moral, the religious and the social, the Sabbath supplies a want. In none of these respects can he reach full manhood without it. We believe that a benevolent God would not leave him without ample provision for all his necessities. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" \* Surely he will give us what is necessary for our redemption from sin and our development to the stature of perfect manhood. Among these necessities is the weekly Sabbath. This is apparent from the preceding discussion.

As we pass now to consider the direct evidence that God has established such a day, and that he

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\* Romans 8 : 32.

made it for man and so for all time, are we not prepared to receive favorably every item of proof and to give every hint of such an establishment its full weight? Is not this the proper attitude of mind to take, since we have been led to *expect* that God would make such provision for our wants? Let us, then, as we take the second step in this discussion, take it with minds open to conviction. We do not urge this because the proof is inadequate, but because so many have taken the contrary course. We have already learned enough from our consideration of the necessity of the Sabbath to make it impossible for us to be over-exacting and over-critical in examining the history of its institution and the nature of its observance. We may proceed with minds unbiased and open to the truth. So doing, we shall not fail to learn the will of God, and to understand his purposes concerning us.



## PART II.

### THE SABBATH OF THE BIBLE WAS MADE FOR ALL MEN.

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#### CHAPTER VI.

##### EARLY INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH.

The sabbath was made for man.—MARK 2:27.

IN the preceding chapters we have attempted to show that the necessity of the Sabbath to man's welfare makes it *probable* that it is a divine institution established for all men. We have, so far, done little more than to amplify the saying of our Lord, "The sabbath was made for man." These words, fairly interpreted, certainly mean that it was intended to meet real wants in the nature of man, and, since these wants exist in all alike, that the Sabbath was designed for all. It would be hard to see how this idea could be expressed in clearer or more unambiguous terms. All do not admit that the words have this meaning. For this reason we propose now to examine the direct evidence that the law of the Sabbath ✓

was meant to be of universal application and perpetual obligation. For this evidence we must go to the word of God.

Our first argument is founded upon the fact that the Sabbath was instituted at the beginning of human history, long before the formation of the Jewish nation. It is admitted that if this early institution of the Sabbath can be shown, it will go far to establish its claim to universality. In his work on "The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy," Paley says, "If the divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species alike, and continues, unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it. If the command was published for the first time in the wilderness, then it was immediately directed to the Jewish people alone, and something further, either in the subject or circumstances of the command, will be necessary to show that it was designed for any other. The former opinion precludes all debate upon the extent of the obligation; the latter admits, and, *prima facie*, induces, a belief that the Sabbath ought to be considered as part of the peculiar law of the Jewish polity."\* This is probably a

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\* Boston ed. 1811, p. 308.



fair statement of the case, though all do not admit that proof of the early institution of the Sabbath settles the question. But Paley denies its early institution,\* and expresses the opinion that the Sabbath was first heard of in the wilderness, after the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. In this he has been followed by a considerable number of writers upon the subject, some of them able and scholarly. Let us examine the record for ourselves, and see which conclusion is warranted by its statements.

In the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis, we read, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."† This seems to be

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\* Paley would have us observe the Lord's day, but he taught that while the appointment of public worship on that day was of divine origin, making it a day of rest was a human arrangement. "Philosophy," Boston ed. 1811, p. 315.

† In the body of the work the scriptural quotations are from the King James Version; but for the convenience of readers who may desire to see them, I have placed in the appendix the passages relating to the Sabbath as translated in the Revised Version. Appendix C.

a perfectly clear and definite statement. It is here put as part of the history of what occurred immediately subsequent to the creation. To say, as Paley and his followers do, that the order of connection here is not one of time but of association, and that these words, written after the giving of the law on Sinai, only state the reason for what was afterward done in the establishment of the Sabbath, is a gratuitous assumption which looks as if it were made in support of a preconceived theory. The fair method of interpretation would be to let the words stand as a record of what then took place, unless there is some insuperable objection to this view. The principal objection is that nothing more is said about a Sabbath for more than two thousand years. It is said that if there was such a thing as a Sabbath during the age of the patriarchs, it is very strange that no mention of it is made in the history. But the mere absence of mention proves nothing. Does any one doubt that the ordinance of circumcision was strictly observed throughout the whole history of the Hebrew people? And yet it is not mentioned from the time of Joshua to that of John the Baptist. From the date of Deut. 16 : 2 the passover is not mentioned until the time of Isaiah; and yet no one doubts that it had a prominent place

in the life of the people. The command to keep the Sabbath was given with all possible solemnity on Sinai, and was carefully observed by pious Hebrews from that time; but it is not mentioned in the record for about five hundred years after the death of Moses. The Bible record is so brief—so many centuries are often covered by a few pages—that many things are omitted which one would expect to find in an extended history. It is not fair to base any argument upon these omissions. As Tayler Lewis has well said of the history of the patriarchs, “To object that the Bible, in its few brief memoranda of their lives, says nothing about their Sabbath-keeping, any more than it tells us of their forms of prayer and modes of worship, is a worthless argument.”\*

But we are not without positive proof that the Sabbath was observed during this period. There are indications of a weekly division of time which must have originated in this institution. Noah was warned seven days before the beginning of the flood.† Twice he waited seven days before sending out the dove from the ark.‡ In the history of Jacob’s marriage there is a direct reference to the week.§ This division of time is not accidental.

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\* Lange on Genesis, p. 197.

† Genesis 7 : 4.

‡ *Ibid.*, 8 : 10–12.

§ *Ibid.*, 29 : 27.

To quote again from Tayler Lewis, "There is certainly indicated here a sevenfold division of days, as already recognized, whatever may be its reasons. Of these, no one seems more easy and natural than that which refers it to the traditional remembrance of the creation, and its seventh day of rest, although some of those who claim to be the higher school of criticism reject it. . . . Now it may be regarded as well settled that such a division of time existed universally among the Shemitic and other Oriental peoples."\* This learned and able writer here touches upon a fact which is of considerable importance to our line of proof. If it can be shown that the most ancient nations had the hebdomadal or weekly division of time, or divisions that may have grown out of it, we shall have strong confirmatory evidence that it originated with the institution of the Sabbath at creation. It is well known that the Chinese nation is so old that its origin is lost in the obscurity of prehistoric times. It has commonly been referred to as a nation without a Sabbath, and its known antiquity has led many to suppose that its want of this institution is an indication that the Sabbath was appointed after the progenitors of the Chinese separated from the

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\* Lange on Genesis, p. 311.

rest of the human family; but recent investigations have changed this inference. The Chinese have many ancient writings, and their historical records have been preserved with great care. Their classics are so old that they were regarded as venerable at the time of Confucius, five hundred years before Christ. In these there are two passages which, according to a translation made by Dr. James Legge, of Oxford, the greatest Chinese scholar of our time, plainly refer to a weekly division of time and to a Sabbath rest on every seventh day. In the funeral rites and mourning customs of the Chinese there are periods of seven days for the different ceremonies. In the imperial almanac, which can be issued only with the sanction of the emperor, every seventh day is marked with a character which is said to mean "secret" or "closed." Their scholars testify that it has been there from time immemorial, though the reason for its presence has been lost. All these facts, and others which might be cited, are indications that the Chinese once had a Sabbath which they long ago ceased to observe because they had no direct or written revelation on the subject.\*

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\* For a fuller presentation of the evidence see "Primitive Sabbath Restored," by Rev. James Johnson, pp. 9-12.

The Accadians, who lived in the valley of the Tigris, were probably the primitive Hamite race. Their descendants who remained in the same region are known to us as Assyrians. The only history, outside of the Bible, that we have of this primitive people is in cuneiform writing upon stone tablets which have, during the past few years, been discovered and exhumed on the site of Nineveh. These tablets, which are themselves very ancient, are probably copies of manuscripts yet older. There is reason to believe that the latter were in existence before the time of Abraham.\* From translations of these tablets made by George Smith, W. Fox Talbot and Rev. A. H. Sayce, it appears that these ancient people had both the septenary division of time and the weekly day of rest. Of a calendar discovered at Nineveh in 1869 Mr. Sayce says, "The chief interest attaching to it is due to the fact that it bears evidence of a seventh-day Sabbath, on which certain works were forbidden to be done among the Babylonians and Assyrians." He refers to the fact that what he renders "Sabbath" is expressed by Accadian words, indicating the antiquity of the observance. He says, however, that "the word Sabbath was not unknown to

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\* See George Smith's "Chaldean Account of Creation."



the Assyrians, and occurs under the form 'Sabbatu.'" Then follows an enumeration of the things prohibited on that day, in which it had some resemblance to the Jewish Sabbath.\* The great Orientalist, Le Normant, says that "the Assyrians recognized the Sabbath. This fact may be positively inferred from the passage of a fragment of a lexicon of Assyrian synonyms, wherein 'yum nuh libbi,' day of repose of the heart, day of joy, is translated 'Sabbatuv,' 'Sabbath.'"†

Thus in the records of two of the most ancient nations we have discovered evidences that the weekly division of time and the Sabbath existed centuries before the time of Moses. This method of dividing time was also in vogue among the ancient Hindus, Scandinavians, Persians and Egyptians. According to a statement of Dion Cassius, a Roman historian of the second century, it was introduced into Rome from Egypt not far from the beginning of the Christian era, probably in 46 B.C., when the calendar was reformed.‡ The fact that a different division of time prevailed among other peoples rather confirms than rebuts the evidence for the early origin of the week,

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\* "Records of the Past," 7, 157.

† "Beginnings of History," p. 249, note.

‡ "History of Rome," 37, 17, 18.



since it was inevitable that a change of this kind would be made in the lapse of time by those who had gone far from the original home of the race or departed from many of the primitive customs. In attempting to discover the antiquity of the week, we are chiefly concerned with its observance by the most ancient peoples. We have already discovered enough to warrant the saying of La Place, "The week is perhaps the most ancient and incontestable monument of human knowledge." Whence did it arise? Those who attempt to account for it on natural grounds are puzzled by the fact that there is no such natural division of time. The nearest approach to it is the lunar month; but this is not twenty-eight days, but twenty-nine and a half. The changes of the moon, therefore, do not furnish a natural division of time into periods of seven days. That it could not have had an astronomical origin of any kind is apparent from the fact that it existed before there was any systematic observation of the heavenly bodies. The fact that the days of the week were named after the sun and moon and the five planets known to the ancients does not prove that the week was established in their honor. There is every reason to believe that the week is older than the names, and that they were given to the days of the week when the heavenly bodies came to be re-

garded as objects of idolatrous worship, signifying that one day was specially appropriated to each divinity.

It is impossible to find in nature any satisfactory explanation of the week. But it is easy to see how some special mark put upon the seventh day at the beginning would lead to such a division of time. Dr. Lewis remarks that this explanation would be considered ample by all scholars, if they were willing to live up to their own rule, that "the Bible is to be interpreted like any other ancient writing." There are many who will accept the most improbable theories rather than admit that the Bible and its institutions had a divine origin. ✓

This explanation of the origin of the week is rendered more probable by the fact that, in ancient times, the seventh day was widely regarded as sacred. Some idea of sacredness has been connected with the number seven from the earliest times. Le Normant says,\* "The sacred character of the number seven . . . dates back to the remotest antiquity among the Chaldæo-Babylonians, and is greatly anterior to the appli- ✓  
cation of the hebdomadal conception to the group of the five planets, with the addition of the sun

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\* "Beginnings of History," p. 249, note.

and moon.” The sacredness of the number seven among the Hebrews is well known. That it should have been so regarded in later time is not strange, but it had this character from the very beginning. Its use in the threatened vengeance upon the slayer of Cain,\* in the boasting of Lamech,† in Jacob’s terms of service for Rachel,‡ in the number of times he bowed before Esau,§ in the dream of Pharaoh and its fulfillment according to Joseph’s interpretation,|| all indicate that it had a sacred and symbolic character. The number seven and the seventh day were sacred among many other peoples. Philo, a contemporary of Christ, writing of the seventh day said, “That day is the festival not of one city or country, but of all the earth.”¶ Whence this sacredness of the number seven? It has been shown that it did not come from any peculiar place which it had in the mathematical studies of the ancients. What more reasonable supposition can there be than that it arose from the fact that in the beginning God sanctified the seventh day? That the sacredness of the number seven and the seventh day existed at so early a date and was so

\* Genesis 4 : 5.

† *Ibid.*, 4 : 24.

‡ *Ibid.*, 29 : 19, 20.

§ *Ibid.*, 33 : 3.

|| *Ibid.*, 41 : 2-7, 25-30 ; 47 : 53, 54.

¶ Bohn’s Eccl. Lib., vol. i. p. 26.

universal is clear proof that the Sabbath must have been given to our first parents.

That the Sabbath was not first heard of when the Hebrews were in the wilderness of Sinai is evident from the terms in which it was then mentioned. The occasion was as follows: When the people came into the wilderness they murmured on account of their lack of food. To supply their wants the Lord sent manna from heaven, which they were to gather daily as they needed it. If any attempted to store it, it bred worms and stank. To this rule there was to be a single exception. The Lord instructed Moses that on the sixth day they were to gather a double portion. Whether or not he told this to the people is uncertain, but it appears not, from the statement that when the people did gather the double portion, "all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses."\* His answer was, "*This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the sabbath unto the Lord.*"† They were directed to prepare food sufficient for the following day, for they would not then find any manna in the field. However, some of the people went out to gather it on the seventh day. "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep

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\* Exodus 16: 22.

† *Ibid.*, v. 23.

my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days : abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”\* Any one who reads this account with an unbiased mind must admit that it does not seem like the first mention of an important institution like the Sabbath. There is no formal announcement of a law. The first allusion to the Sabbath is in the words addressed to Moses, “And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”† Such an incidental mention of the Sabbath is the best possible proof of its previous existence. No reason is given for this direction, implying that one already existed which would be well understood. If this is the first mention of a Sabbath, it is very strange that no reason is given for its observance. Never before or since was a law of such importance announced in such a way. Again, if the Sabbath had not before been heard of, what pertinence or force is there in the inquiry of the Lord, “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and obey my laws?” Here the law of the Sab-

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\* Exodus 16 : 28, 29.† *Ibid.*, v. 5.

bath is referred to as though it had been long in existence. That some of them disobeyed it is no objection to this view. They had been about four centuries in Egypt, and probably had been deprived of the Sabbath. Enough had been able to observe it, to keep knowledge of it alive among the people, but, no doubt, those who had wrought as common slaves had had no Sabbath at all. It is for this reason, probably, that the idea of rest is here emphasized. The phrase in the twenty-third verse is, "the resting, the rest of holiness unto the Lord"; for the two words are the same, and "sabbath" is the Hebrew word for "rest." The people were surprised, it is true, at the double portion of manna on the sixth day, but that is not strange, even though they were anticipating a day of rest on the morrow, and the explanation given by Moses that it was the Lord's provision to enable them more perfectly to keep the Sabbath seems to have readily satisfied them. Our conclusion is that the terms of the narrative indicate that the Sabbath was not at this time first instituted.

The form of the fourth commandment shows that the Sabbath had been previously known. It is, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord



thy God : *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates : for *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”\* Notice that it is said, “Remember the sabbath day,” as though they had known of it but were in danger of forgetting it. This danger had been augmented by the enforced non-observance of the day in Egypt. There was, therefore, special pertinence in telling them to remember it. Again, the reason given for the command is what God did at the creation. He “rested on the seventh day,” and “blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” It is almost an exact repetition of the words in which the Sabbath is first mentioned. It is not said that God rested and that he *blesses* and *hallows* the Sabbath, but all these acts are put in the past. There is a plain allusion to events that had occurred long before. There is no reason whatever for putting a long interval of time between his resting and the act of blessing and hallowing the Sabbath. It is true that in another place† the

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\* Exodus 20 : 8-11.

† Deuteronomy 5 : 15.

reason given to the Hebrews for keeping the Sabbath is that God brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and this has been referred to as proving that it is an exclusively Jewish institution. But this is not stated as their *only* reason for keeping it; it was an additional reason, having special force with them because the day of rest, as a blessed privilege, stood over against their former bondage. It also suggested to them the propriety of giving their servants one day of rest in seven, since their suffering in Egypt from unremitting toil should make them careful not to oppress others in the same way. The statement\* that the Sabbath was to be a sign between God and his chosen people has been used to establish the same opinion. But the mere appointing of an appropriate thing as a sign does not prove that it never before existed. In Genesis we read, "And God said, . . . I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth";† but everybody knows that there must have been rainbows from the time when the present order of things began. The same use has been made of a similar passage in Ezekiel. It occurs in the twentieth chapter, and reads, "And I gave them my statutes, and shewed

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\* Exodus 31 : 13-17.

† Genesis 9 : 13.

them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the Lord that sanctify them.”\* It cannot be argued from this that the Sabbath was devised especially for the Jews unless it is, at the same time, admitted that the “statutes” and “judgments” of the Lord had not before existed and were for no others. They are all connected in this statement. The “statutes” and “judgments” were not invented for the Jews; they were eternal principles, but were fully made known to them in the giving of the law. The Sabbath was also made known to them more fully than to others, and they were instructed in the manner of keeping it, but it was not invented for them. Almost the same forms of expression occur in the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, except that there it is said, “And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath.” This seems to imply that the command to keep the Sabbath was simply a full revelation of an institution which God had previously established; else why are they called *his* Sabbaths, and why is it said that they were *made known*, and not that they were instituted for the chosen people?

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\* Ezekiel 20 : 11, 12.

The nature of this early Sabbath is hinted at in the words which record its institution. God *rested* from the work of creation. This is evidently meant to teach men that on the seventh day they are to cease from secular toil and rest. The question might here arise whether the statement that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day has reference to the periods of creation or to days of twenty-four hours. So far as the history is concerned, it refers to the periods of creation; but the lesson drawn for man from God's action applies to *man's* days. The difference in length is an element which need not be considered in a discussion of the Sabbath. It is not stated that God became inactive. The work of material creation was finished, but he continued to work upon the minds and hearts of men. He turned, so far as this world is concerned, from the material to the spiritual. And this gives us a hint as to the true nature of the Sabbath. It is the day in which to care for the soul. This idea is more fully developed in the statement that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. He made it a blessing to man, not only because on it he was to rest, but also because it afforded him the means of caring for the wants of his higher nature. Sanctifying the day means that God set it apart as a day to be de-

voted to holy uses. It could have no higher use than to keep man near to his God and to cultivate his moral and religious nature.

But have we any indication that a Sabbath of this kind was kept in the early days of human history? There can be no doubt that men have worshipped God from the first. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices.\* In Genesis 4:26 we read, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." It is generally agreed that this is an account of the first public religious services. Says Lange, "it must be that here is narrated the beginning of formal divine worship."† Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob built altars unto the Lord. This seems to indicate that there were stated places of worship. We have seen that the number seven and the seventh day were, in ancient times, regarded as sacred. What more natural than to suppose that the worship which is here clearly referred to was held on that day? This view is confirmed by the words with which the account of the offerings of Cain and Abel is begun. "And at the end of days, it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." "At the end of days" must mean at the end of some fixed and

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\* Genesis 4:3, 4.

† Commentary on Genesis, p. 262.

well-known period. We know of no such period at that time except the week, at the end of which the Sabbath came. The references to a Sabbath in the Chinese, Hindu and Assyrian records and books of worship show that it had, in the earliest times, a somewhat similar use among these peoples. It is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that a Sabbath, on which men rested from secular toil and engaged in the worship of God, was instituted at the beginning of human history. Just as the law of marriage and the law of property are older than the decalogue, so the law of the Sabbath, having its origin in the needs of man and in the benevolence and wisdom of God, was given to the first man, and but repeated and emphasized on Sinai. This agrees fully with the view already presented that the Sabbath is necessary to the welfare of man, and that it was made for him. If this institution has the relation to man's welfare which we have pointed out, it is probable that God would not withhold it for twenty-five hundred years, and then give it to one nation and limit its application to them alone. The probability is changed to approximate certainty by the evidence we have examined that he did proclaim a Sabbath to our first parents. The bearing of this conclusion upon the general discussion will be readily perceived. If the Sabbath did



have this early origin, it was given to the whole race, and should be observed by every human being. It takes it at once out of the category of Jewish institutions, and gives it a general character. We are aware that this is denied by some, though generally admitted. Dr. Thomas Arnold, in attempting to prove the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath, said, "If the law itself be done away in Christ, much more the things before the law."\* But that depends on whether "the things before the law" were in the nature of moral precepts and had a vital relation to the welfare of man. The moral law itself is not done away in Christ; no more are the things before it which God made obligatory upon man. Unless it can be shown that the law of the Sabbath, given at the creation, has been repealed by a new legislative act of God, it is still binding upon all men who learn of it. For, coming at this time, it was not given to one man or to one nation, but to the whole human family. That it has become known to us through the Mosaic law does not change the nature or the extent of this obligation. When God spoke moral precepts to Moses, he meant them to reach the ear and the heart of the world.

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\* Sermons, vol. iii. p. 256.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE COMMAND TO KEEP THE SABBATH A PART OF THE MORAL LAW.

Men do not know what they are doing, when by their teaching or example they encourage the neglect or profanation of the Lord's day.—HODGE.

THE proposition which we have made the heading of this chapter is fiercely disputed by the enemies of the Sabbath, and is more or less strongly controverted by some of its friends. These friends of the Sabbath, thinking that the fourth commandment is not a part of the moral law, have sought for other grounds on which to maintain the sacredness of the Lord's day. As we hold that it is difficult to prove the divine origin and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath without maintaining the truth of this proposition, it will be necessary, in the present discussion, to define our position with some care, and to be sure of our ground at every step.

It is customary to divide the commands of God, especially those delivered to the Jews, into two classes, and to call them *positive* precepts and *moral* precepts. These are technical terms

which have been found convenient to express a distinction which we shall now try to make clear, in order to show the true place of the fourth commandment. By a *positive* precept is meant one which is not founded in the nature of things, and which, therefore, is not universal and permanent, but provisional and temporary. It is a command given for some temporary purpose, and ceases to be binding when that purpose is accomplished. At one time it might be a sin to disobey such a command, and at another time circumstances might arise which would make it a sin to obey it. It might be given to one people and have no binding force upon any other. Of this nature were the commands of the ceremonial law concerning the temple service, circumcision, the offering of sacrifices and other rites of the Mosaic dispensation. They were given to the Jews alone, and were meant to be temporary. The ceremonies they involved were largely typical, and disappeared with the coming of their antitypes. Obedience to these commands by those to whom they were addressed was a duty, because God is the supreme Lawgiver, and because his purposes could not have been accomplished without it; but they had no natural foundation. In most cases it would be wrong for Christians to obey them, because it would

imply a rejection of the work of God by which they have been superseded.

On the other hand, a *moral* precept is one which would have been binding upon us if it had never been expressed in formal terms. It is grounded in the constitution of things, and is part of an eternal and unchangeable law. Whatever it enjoins or prohibits is not made right or wrong by the special enactment. It commands only what was always right and prohibits what was always wrong. Such precepts can never be repealed. They are as unchangeable as the law of gravitation, which will continue to act until the material universe is reconstructed on an entirely new plan. This is not saying that God is not the author of moral law: it is only saying that he wrote the moral law upon the nature of things before he wrote it upon tables of stone. Of this class are the commands to love and worship and obey God, to tell the truth, to be honest, and to be chaste. Men were bound to abstain from the worship of idols, to worship their Creator as the supreme Being, and to do his will in all things, before the law was given on Sinai. It could never have been right to lie, or steal, or commit adultery or murder, if these acts had not been prohibited in a written law. The right to expect the truth in the statements of others, the

right to hold and use property acquired by lawful means, the right to demand marital faithfulness in husband or wife, and the right to one's own life, are natural and inalienable rights which are not created by any formal legislation. Laws stating these rights are binding upon all men, and can never be innocently disregarded. We do not limit his power when we reverently say that God himself cannot repeal them, for he can never make wrong right, or right wrong. There can never be any occasion for repealing them so long as the present order of things exists. The law of property or of marriage may not be needed in another state of existence; but we cannot conceive of changes which will make it right to lie. Such are the differences between *positive* and *moral* precepts.

It is not claimed that all moral laws are so obviously written on the nature of things that men will at once discover them and see the reason for their existence. It is claimed only that such a reason exists, and that it may be perceived when any such law is promulgated.

Though this distinction between positive and moral precepts is a useful one, it is not to be supposed that every law which God has given to men in the Scriptures is wholly moral or wholly positive. Some of the commands which are

plainly moral in their foundation and substance were to be enforced, among the Hebrews, by rules and regulations which were positive and temporary in their character. Illustrations of this fact may be found in the methods according to which adultery was to be detected and manslaughter avenged. The sixth and seventh commandments are a part of the moral law; and yet the methods of dealing with offences against them were evidently meant to be temporary. The fourth commandment belongs to the same class: it was moral in its substance, and so of universal and perpetual obligation, while at the same time it had certain positive and transient elements. These will be considered in subsequent chapters. Our present business is to show that, in its substance, it is a part of the moral law. In maintaining this position we will follow five distinct lines of proof which have been found: (1) in the fact that it forms an integral part of the decalogue, which was promulgated in circumstances of such significance as to warrant us in asserting that God meant to honor it as a summary of the moral law; (2) in the fact that it is founded in the nature of things; (3) in the fact that the Sabbath is necessary to man in order that he may perform some of his highest duties—duties which he cannot neglect without violating



moral obligations; (4) in the severity of the penalties which were attached to violations of this command; and (5) in the importance which was given to it by the prophets and teachers of Israel. Let us consider these arguments in the order here suggested.

I. We claim that the command to keep the Sabbath is a part of the moral law, because it is placed in direct connection with other commands that are obviously moral. It is true that moral and positive precepts are sometimes spoken of in the same connection. This occurs in one or two condensed summaries of the commands which God had laid upon the Hebrew people. But the passage containing the decalogue is plainly not one of this kind. It is universally admitted that it is a summary of the moral law. It was given in circumstances of peculiar solemnity. Announcements were made to the people leading them to expect something very unusual. When the appointed day arrived, the utterance of these commands was accompanied by "thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud,"\* and fire and thick smoke, and the quaking of the mountain. These signs indicated that the com-

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\* Exodus 19 : 16.

mands of the Lord on that occasion were to have peculiar weight. They were thus set apart from all others and given a special significance. No other commands were given at that time. From the beginning to the end of the passage which contains them, not a word is said of rites and ceremonies. Hooker very eloquently describes this difference between the ten commandments and the ceremonial law in the following words: "They were not both at one time delivered, neither both after one sort nor to one end. The former uttered by the voice of God himself in the hearing of six hundred thousand men; the former written with the finger of God; the former termed by the name of a covenant; the former given to be kept without either mention of time how long or of place where. On the other side, the latter given after, and neither written by God himself nor given unto the whole multitude immediately from God, but unto Moses, and from him to them both by word and writing; the latter termed ceremonies, judgments, ordinances, but nowhere covenants; finally, the observance of the latter restrained unto the land where God would establish them to inhabit."\* These commandments were twice

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\* "Ecclesiastical Polity," bk. iii. 11, 6.

inscribed by the finger of God upon tables of stone. They are frequently referred to in both the Old and New Testaments in a way to indicate that they are entitled to peculiar respect.

Now, is it not a violent and unnatural procedure to wrench one of these commandments from its connection and say that while nine of them are moral, this one is positive? They are all addressed to the Jews; so that, if this affects one, it affects all. One of them, which is confessedly moral, has a promise attached to it which seems to have been addressed expressly to them. The fifth commandment is, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."\* Because this promise has no immediate application to us, does it follow that children are absolved from the duty of treating their parents with affection and respect? Unless some very good reason can be given for removing it, the fourth commandment must stand as part of the moral law. It may be said that such a reason appears in the fact that it has no natural foundation like that upon which the other commands rest.

II. We assert that it has, and this is our sec-

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\* Exodus 20 : 12.

ond reason for claiming that it is a moral precept. In proving that the Sabbath was necessary to the welfare of man, we have given it a natural foundation. Why is it wrong to lie or steal? Chiefly because lying and stealing are destructive of the best interests of mankind. If the truth were rarely or never told, so that men had no confidence in one another, and if the rights of property were never respected, civilization and progress would be impossible. Truth-telling and honesty—even the kinds that can be enforced by law—are absolutely essential to the welfare of man. The law of the Sabbath has exactly the same foundation in the nature of things. Man cannot prosper and reach a high destiny without the observance it enjoins. It is true that it is in the first table of the law, and the duties it requires are primarily duties to God; but this does not make it unnecessary to perform them, unless we deny that we lose anything by neglecting our duties to him. However, the point we wish here to enforce is that the law of the Sabbath cannot be violated without injury to ourselves. Self-love is a duty. While selfishness—the mere gratification of low desires, or the pursuit of our own advantage at the expense of others—is forbidden, we are bound to care for our own highest interests.

Every man is under obligation to make the most of himself, to secure the fullest development of all his powers. He ought also to adopt and advocate that method of life which, in general, would bring about the best results for the race, if it were adopted by all men. If these principles are correct—and we do not see how their correctness can be denied—the observance of the Sabbath takes its place among universal duties. If it is essential to the welfare of man, he who disregards it neglects an important part of the first duty which he owes to himself and to his fellow men. If the Sabbath was made for man—for the promotion of his higher interests—the fourth commandment must remain a part of the moral law.

III. A third reason for this position is that the Sabbath is necessary to the performance of some of man's most important duties and to the enjoyment of some of his highest privileges. These belong to all men; but if the Sabbath was not meant for all, they are rendered impossible to some. They are duties and privileges which do not change with the lapse of time; but if the law of the Sabbath has ceased to be obligatory, they have now passed beyond the reach of man. A study of the *purposes* of the Sabbath, in this respect, will make it evident that the command

to observe it is a moral precept. The most important of these purposes were—(1) To celebrate the creation of the world. It is plainly implied that the Sabbath was appointed as a perpetual memorial of the fact that in six days God created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day.\* Men would need such a memorial, or they would forget the fact. The Sabbath and knowledge of the origin of the world were lost together. Then came vain speculations and foolish theories which have not yet become things of the past. It is important for man to know and remember the truth in this matter. If the world and its inhabitants were “evolved” or have “developed” from chaotic matter, man’s destiny and duty are very different from what they would be in case the Bible account of creation is true. The Sabbath is a constant reminder of the fact, which we apprehend by faith, that “the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”† (2) To keep alive in the minds of men the knowledge of God. This point is very closely related to what precedes; for if men remember that God created the

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\* Genesis 2 : 2, 3 ; Exodus 20 : 11.

† Hebrews 11 : 3.



world, they will not altogether forget him. And yet, irrespective of their theory of creation, there is a constant tendency among men to lose the consciousness of God from their minds. The heathen are described as “the nations that forget God”;\* and we know how universal that state was before the coming of Christ. The Sabbath reminds men that they are in a world which God created and sustains; that they themselves are the creatures of his care and subject to his laws; and that he has made himself known by interpositions on their behalf. The Sabbath, as re-established on Sinai, reminded the Jews of their deliverance from Egypt; and as confirmed by the apostles reminds Christians of the resurrection of their Lord. It stands as God’s day, made holy unto him, and thus keeps alive our knowledge of him. (3) To give men opportunity to think of eternal things and to care for their souls. As we have already shown, the inevitable tendency of constant occupation in secular pursuits is to make men forget the spiritual and to live only for the carnal and the present. They need to have their minds called off from these things and turned toward those that are higher. It is of little use to remind them of the existence and

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\* Psalm 9 : 17.

claims of God, if no opportunity is given them to worship him and to study his word. To make such a reminder of any value, a set time must be fixed when ordinary occupations shall cease, so that all may be released from work on the same day, and gather for public worship. Men need complete change from secular work in order that their minds may be free to acquire knowledge and receive impressions from God through his accredited messengers. It is only thus that they can be prepared for life in this world, or for their eternal destiny. (4) To afford rest and recuperation for the body. It has been shown that this is a universal and pressing need. It is a blessed privilege, making almost the difference between slaves and freemen for the great mass of mankind.

Now, in what sense does any one of these purposes affect a Jew more than any other man? If a Sabbath, given with these ends in view, was good for one people, why is it not good for all peoples? How can any of these purposes be temporary or provisional? They are good things in themselves, and are not preparatory to something higher in the future earthly life of the race. If they are provisional at all, it is only with respect to the future world. Is it not good for all men to remember that God created the world,

and that he still reigns and claims our worship and obedience? Do not all men need to care for their souls, and to have physical rest in order that they may recuperate their strength? These privileges are also duties. To remember God as Creator, Ruler and Redeemer, to worship him, to come out of the confusion and noise of the world's work and listen to his voice in the midst of Sabbath stillness, to meditate upon the eternal future, and to care for the soul's interests, are among the primary duties of all men. If these are duties which cannot be performed without the Sabbath, then the observance of the Sabbath is a moral duty. These are so connected that to disregard the latter is to neglect all the others. A man is put in charge of a house and bidden to keep it in good repair. He digs out its foundation so that the house falls, and then justifies himself by saying that he was not told to care for the foundation. The plea is insufferably silly, but it is exactly the argument which men use when they say that the command to keep the Sabbath is not a part of the moral law. They would destroy the possibility of performing certain primary and important duties, and then deny that there was any immorality in the act. They would make men godless, and then say that their deed was not ungodly.

IV. This view of the fourth commandment is confirmed by the penalty which was attached to disobedience of it. Under the Jewish law Sabbath-breakers were adjudged worthy of death. No such penalty was ever attached to a ceremonial law. The violation of those that were most important incurred no greater penalty than separation from the congregation of Israel and forfeiture of its privileges. The question here is not whether that penalty was meant to be perpetual and ought now to be inflicted. On this point there would be no dispute. We are not now under a formal theocracy, and the death-penalty is not inflicted for sins, but only for certain crimes. The abolition of the penalty, however, does not imply the abrogation of the command. If this were the case, the commands forbidding idolatry, abusing a parent, and adultery, would also be abrogated, for under the Hebrew law those who disobeyed them were punished with death.\* But the severe penalty does clearly distinguish the law of the Sabbath from the ceremonial law. It shows that more importance was attached to it than to any law not having a moral bearing.

V. Finally, we believe that the fourth com-

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\* For a complete answer to this objection see Chapter XIII.

mandment is part of the moral law because the inspired teachers so often and so emphatically speak of the violation of the Sabbath as a great sin, and of its observance as a practice which secures the blessing of God. The command to keep it holy is repeated five times in the book of Exodus, twice in Leviticus and once in Deuteronomy. If we turn to the prophets, we find that they place Sabbath-keeping among the most important virtues, such as keeping judgment and doing justice. Says Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation *is* near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed *is* the man that doeth this, and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I *am* a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the

sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”\* Also, “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”† The message of Jeremiah on this subject was: “Thus said the Lord unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings

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\* Isaiah 56 : 1-7.

† *Ibid.*, 58 : 13, 14.



of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates : thus saith the Lord ; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem ; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein ; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem : and this city shall remain for ever.”\* The severest judgments were announced against those who profaned the Sabbath. We have seen that the death penalty was attached to its violation by individuals. When the people generally disregarded it, they called down upon themselves by that act the judgment

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\* Jeremiah 17 : 19-25.

of an offended God. In immediate connection with the passage just quoted from Jeremiah, we read, "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."\* Ezekiel, acting as the mouthpiece of the Lord, thus explains some of the past judgments upon Israel: "Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands; because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols."† In passages like this the profaning of the Sabbath is certainly not classed with violations of the ceremonial law. Those stern preachers of righteousness, the prophets, cared little for rites and ceremonies. They distinctly announced that sacrifices and offerings and formal assemblies were offensive to God if the hearts of the people were not in them. But the keeping of the Sabbath is described as something which he will rigidly re-

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\* Jeremiah 17 : 24-27.

† Ezekiel 20 : 15, 16.

quire. If they use it for their own purposes, if they secularize it, or if they use it for the worship of idols, they may expect his judgments.

From these considerations it seems clear that the fourth commandment is part of the moral law. As such it is for all men and for every age. Just as every man is bound not to lie or steal or commit murder, or worship idols, or take the name of God in vain, so he is bound to keep a Sabbath. It is not a question of expediency, except as the right is always expedient. It may be that the necessity for keeping the Sabbath would not have been discovered by man as soon as the necessity for truth-telling or honesty or chastity, because his interests are more indirectly affected by it; but now that it has been revealed, it is easy to understand that the law enforcing it is a moral law which can never be annulled. After we have made the most of the *positive* elements which it contains—and we are willing they should all be eliminated—there is still a moral element in this law that makes it binding upon the consciences of all men. That element of the law enjoins the duty of reserving one seventh of our time from worldly pursuits and making it holy unto the Lord. The manner in which this is to be done will appear as the subject is more fully developed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LAW OF THE SABBATH HAS NEVER BEEN REPEALED.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.—*MATT.* 5 : 17, 18.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.—*ROM.* 3 : 31.

IF the conclusions of the preceding chapter are just, the law of the Sabbath can never be abrogated. So far as it is a moral law it must remain binding upon all men while the world stands. The positive, but not the moral, elements can be changed. But those who claim that it is only a positive precept assert that it has gone by, with all the rest of the old dispensation. Some who teach that Sunday should be used, in conformity to the example of the apostles, to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, deny that the Mosaic law concerning the Sabbath has any relation to us, or that the Christian Sabbath has been substituted for the Jewish. This view has been most fully elaborated by Dr. Hessey in his lectures on "Sunday." He concludes the fourth lecture with these remarks: "First, that the Sabbath, prop-

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erly so called, the Sabbath of the Jews, with everything connected with it, as a positive ordinance, was swept away by Christianity. Secondly, that this is without prejudice to the Lord's day. Thirdly, that it is not necessary to seek, for the Lord's day, either identity in substance or directly antitypical connection with the Sabbath.\* No language could assert more plainly that the Sabbath commanded on Sinai has disappeared, and that the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, is an entirely new institution. He is not by any means alone in his view that the Jewish Sabbath has wholly disappeared. F. W. Robertson, after speaking of the reasons which the early Christians found for observing Sunday as a sacred day, says: "Carefully distinguish this, the true historical view of the origin of the Lord's day, from the mere transference of a Jewish Sabbath from one day to another. For St. Paul's teaching is distinct and clear that the Sabbath is annulled."† From the connection it is plain that he means to assert that the fourth commandment has been completely and finally abrogated. In another place he maintains even more strongly its repeal, for he says, "The observance of one day in seven

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\* Page 128.

† Sermons, second series, p. 204.

is purely Jewish.”\* Of course even that, if it is “purely” Jewish, is not binding upon us, and a weekly Sabbath grounded upon divine authority is a thing of the past. This opinion seems to be shared by Dr. George B. Bacon, for, in “The Sabbath Question,” he says, “When I say that Christianity superseded the Jewish law, I mean just as Paul meant, that it superseded the whole of the Jewish law.” He explains his meaning by the remark that “it is safe to ground all duty” on “an appeal to the Spirit of Christ—to that love which is the living power of his kingdom.”† We might quote from others in the same line, but it is not necessary. We have quoted from these authors in order to make it evident that there is reason for taking pains to show that the law of the Sabbath has not been annulled. While they, in common with others who share their opinion, believe firmly in the Sabbath, resting upon apostolic example, and would have it carefully observed, there are many others who would be glad to be rid of the Sabbath altogether, and who find reason for abolishing it in the supposed abolition of the Jewish law. If that law has been done away, they have good reason for saying that there

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\* Sermons, first series, p. 115.

† Page 183.



is no longer any Sabbath at all. There is nothing in the example of the apostles to oblige the most tender conscience to abstain from secular employment on the first day of the week, if there is no other authority for observing a weekly Sabbath. Those who say that the law of the Sabbath is abolished, unintentionally ally themselves with those who would altogether destroy this blessed institution.

But we assert that the law of the Sabbath, so far as it is a moral law, has never been annulled. A law can be repealed only by the same authority that enacted it. It certainly cannot be done away by those who are subject to it. If the law of the Sabbath, as it appeared in the Ten Commandments, has been abolished, it must have been done by some decree of Jehovah. Where have we the record of such a decree? Through what prophet or apostle was it spoken? Let us examine the ground on which the assertion that it has been set aside is made.

I. It is claimed that Christ nowhere re-enacts this law; that he expressed sentiments adverse to the observance of the Jewish Sabbath; and that his actions seem to indicate that he did not consider it binding upon himself or his followers.

With regard to the first of these statements it is sufficient to say that there was no occasion for

re-enacting it. The law was still in force, and would remain so until a direct announcement was made that it had been repealed. It was not necessary to remind the Jews of it, for they had made the command to keep the Sabbath the most prominent part of the whole law. Misled by the emphasis placed upon it in the Scriptures, they were giving it disproportionate importance. Why should Christ re-enact a law which was so constantly in their minds, and which was abused in the direction of over-strict observance? This is not the treatment we would expect him to give it; we should rather expect him to correct the prevalent abuses of it. This was precisely his course. In so doing he plainly recognized the command as still of binding force. Of the whole law he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."\* The ceremonial law he would fulfill, for it had in it a prophetic element pointing to him and the Church he would found; but the moral law would remain. If any changes were made in it, it would be in the way of giving its precepts a deeper significance by making them refer to the inner life as well as to the words and actions. In his discussion of the law, which we

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\* Matthew 5 : 17.

find in the Sermon on the Mount, he corrects prevalent misunderstandings of certain laws ; in other places he does the same for the law of the Sabbath. On several occasions he referred to the decalogue as containing the moral law. When a lawyer came to him with the question, " Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law ? " \* hoping by his answer to bring out his antagonism to the rabbis, who had classified the commandments into great and small, he gave a summary of the two tables of the law as embodying our whole duty to God and man. This does not look much as though he meant to abolish that law or any part of it. To another he said, " If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." † It is true that, when asked to specify, he does not name them all, but it does not follow that he abrogated those he did not mention. If he did, the first three must go as well as the fourth. In the saying, " keep the commandments," he seems to confirm them all. These three sayings indicate plainly enough his attitude toward the law in general. While he would change the spirit in which men should obey its precepts, the law itself was to remain unchanged.

Concerning the law of the Sabbath the case is

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\* Matthew 22 : 36.

† *Ibid.*, 19 : 17.

even more plain. He said, "The Sabbath was made for man; and not man for the Sabbath."\* The direct purpose of these words was to correct a misuse of the Sabbath. The Jews had made it a burden; had even gone so far as to say that human life was of little consequence compared with keeping it inviolate. Christ wished them to understand that it was intended to be a blessing to man; that except for this it was useless, and that, therefore, no real human good was to be sacrificed for the sake of a particular method of observing it. This is the direct meaning of his words; but indirectly they teach that the Sabbath was made for all men, and was designed to be a universal and perpetual blessing. It was not made for any particular class or race of men, but for *man*, the generic man, the whole human family. His words cannot be twisted into meaning anything else. Because the definite article is before the Greek word for man, it has been maintained that the reference is to a particular class of men, as though Christ had said *the man*, that is, *the Jewish man*. But competent scholars have shown that this is the ordinary method of expressing in Greek the idea of man in general. The authors of the Canterbury version give it

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\* Mark 2 : 27.

this meaning. Alford so translates it, and comments accordingly. Professor A. C. Kendrick, in explaining this, remarks, "The Greek language has no other way of properly designating the *genus homo*." The objection is too trivial to require further notice. Christ certainly said that the Sabbath was made for man. This is, in effect, a recognition of the law of the Sabbath as binding upon all men, only it must be rightly understood.

If Christ had intended to repeal this law, it is quite certain that we should have from him an express statement to that effect. If that had been his purpose, he would have declared it in his conflicts with the Pharisees on the Sabbath question. When they criticised him—even sought to slay him—on account of his violation of *their* rules for keeping the Sabbath, what could have been more natural than for him to say, "I abolish this institution altogether"? He did say, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day,"\* asserting his right to do with it as he pleased. Why did he not inform them then that the Sabbath was a thing of the past? That would have been the easiest way to settle the dispute. He was accustomed to go to the root of matters. Such a course would have made them no more

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\* Matthew 12: 8.

angry than they were. Suppose a committee of citizens in one of our states should wait upon a legislature to complain that they were violating a law which that legislature had already repealed: would the legislature conceal their action and go into an elaborate argument to show that they had not violated it in its true meaning? Would they not, instead, say at once, "Why, we have repealed that law; it is no longer binding upon any one in the state," as the shortest and most complete answer they could make to the charge? The very fact that Christ said nothing of the kind concerning the law of the Sabbath is good proof that he had no intention of repealing it. We can find no words of Christ derogatory to this institution as it was originally established, or as it was intended to be observed. All his utterances on the subject were for the purpose of removing misapprehensions or of correcting abuses. It is strange that he should take so much pains to establish the Sabbath upon a proper foundation and promote right views of it, if he had any intention of doing away with the institution altogether. What his corrections were, and how he would have us keep it, we shall try to discover when we come to discuss the nature of the Sabbath.\* Our only pur-

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\* See Chapter XIII.



pose, at present, is to show that there is nothing in his words which indicates an intention on his part to abolish it.

The same is true of his actions. There is no record that he ever did anything upon the Sabbath not consistent with its purposes from the beginning. He healed the sick; but works of mercy on that day were never forbidden except in the rabbinical perversions of the Sabbath. He defended his disciples when they plucked a few heads of wheat to satisfy their hunger, but this was not really work, any more than the ordinary process of eating is work; and he showed his accusers that the law of hunger was higher than *their* view of the Sabbath law. It may be said that if Christ had recognized the law of the Sabbath as binding upon himself and his disciples, they would not have been walking in the fields on that day. But nothing is said of the purpose for which they walked. They may have been going to or from a synagogue, or to some place of assembly where Christ was to deliver one of his discourses. The first supposition seems very reasonable when we remember that other Jews were with them. We may be sure that they were not on a journey or walking for pleasure, or that would have been the ground of the charge made against them for Sabbath-breaking. It is

said that Christ went to a feast on the Sabbath, and thus showed that he did not regard the fourth commandment. The most that can truly be said is that he went on that day to eat at the house of a Pharisee. That it was at the house of a Pharisee is sufficient proof that no violation of the Sabbath occurred. There is no intimation that it was a feast. It was probably an ordinary meal. Christ was not compelled by the law of the Sabbath to fast; he had no home of his own: why should he not eat in this house as well as in any other? Whoever will read this chapter\* will be compelled to admit that he went there for religious conversation, and that nothing occurred to offend the strictest observer of the true Sabbath law.

It is fair to conclude that Christ never intended to abolish the Sabbath. The only conceivable ground for such a statement is the fact that he opposed the notions of it prevalent in his time. But his efforts to correct these furnish the best evidence that he was desirous of preserving the true Sabbath. He said that it became him to "fulfil all righteousness." He voluntarily placed himself under the law, including the law of the Sabbath. Thus he not only maintained the

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\* Luke 14.

sacredness of the Sabbath by his words, but he also kept it as an example for us. Says Lyman Abbott, "Jesus never said or did anything which a reasonable construction can interpret as indicating a desire to pluck away from a weary world its divinest institution, a weekly Sabbath. He distinctly asserts that he did not come to abrogate the Mosaic laws, but to fulfill them; and the Sabbath will never have its final fulfillment until the day when the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. There is no indication that Jesus engaged himself in secular work on the Sabbath, or encouraged his disciples to do so. If they had plied their customary labor, casting their nets, for example, on that day, it would certainly have been recorded against them. But not even Jewish tradition contains any such charge. His followers did not understand that he took from them this ancient Jewish privilege." \*

II. But do the *apostles* teach that the fourth commandment is no longer in force; that it is not binding upon Christians? It is asserted by many that they do, and appeals are made to their epistles to maintain the assertion. Let us examine these writings and see whether any such view is

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\* "Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 203, 204.

warranted. A general survey of what they wrote on the subject of the Mosaic law brings out clearly three points :

First, the ceremonial law was fulfilled in the death of Christ and in the establishment of the spiritual Church, and is no longer in force. This law was but “a shadow of good things to come.”\* There is to be no more a line of priests to intercede between God and his people, for “we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.”† No more sacrifices are to be offered in the temple, for “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”‡ Even circumcision, the distinguishing mark of the Hebrew, is done away, “for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”§ That the ceremonial law has thus passed away no one will deny.

Second, Christians—believers in Christ—are no longer subject to the law as a standard of final judgment. Obedience to its requirements is not a condition of acceptance with God. Failure to attain the absolute perfection which it requires will not necessarily involve their condemnation, for they may obtain mercy and forgiveness of

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\* Hebrews 10 : 1.

† *Ibid.*, 4 : 14.

‡ *Ibid.*, 9 : 28.

§ Galatians 5 : 6.

sins. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”\* “For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”† “There *is*, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”‡ “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”§

Third, true Christians are not subject to the bondage of the law. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”|| “If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”¶ “Ye also are become dead to the law.”\*\* “We are delivered from the law.”†† This is what Paul meant by “the glorious liberty of the children of God.”‡‡ They are not unwilling subjects of the law. Having been made “new creatures” in Christ, they love God and delight in his law. They do not feel its restrictions as a burden, for they are glad to observe them. They take pleasure in performing the duties it enjoins, and are not constrained to them by fear of punishment or hope of reward. Thus they are made free from

\* Galatians 3 : 13.

† Romans 10 : 4.

‡ *Ibid.*, 8 : 1.

§ *Ibid.*, 6 : 14.

|| *Ibid.*, 8 : 2.

¶ Galatians 5 : 18.

\*\* Romans 7 : 4.

†† *Ibid.*, 7 : 6.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, 8 : 21.

the law by rising above it. Thus "love is the fulfilling of the law."

A fourth point seems equally clear, namely, that the law still remains as a restraining and constraining power upon those who, because of weak faith, do not enjoy this liberty, and as a rule of conduct for all, "enlightening the eyes" even of those who have the most perfect love. While the Christian should be able to obey its precepts with a different spirit, he must still obey them. He cannot trust to his own impulses, even when these have been partly purified by the Spirit. The "inner light" is not always clear. So much of evil remains in us that, if we trust to our impulses, we shall be led into vagaries and even into positive sins. This has always been the history of those who have depended upon the "inner light." Men who have maintained their independence of the law have become lawless in the worst sense of the word. True Christians do not feel the law as a burden, but the best need it as a guide. If it be said by Christians, "We look for instruction to Christ and his apostles, and not to Moses," we reply that Christ and his apostles appealed to Moses, and quoted his law as the best rule of conduct. The apostles make this use of it after the death of Christ, by which, in a sense, we are freed from the law. Paul says,



“Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”\* How could he have given it higher praise? And this he says just after the declaration, “We are delivered from the law.” Does he mean that we are delivered from that which is “holy, and just, and good,” and that we are henceforth to disregard the things required in the law? Not at all. He simply means that we are freed from the penalty and the bondage of the law. Again he says, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”† Here his meaning obviously is that the law is not only honored by the redemption through Christ, but is established in the minds of those who through faith enjoy this redemption, faith giving ability to appreciate its excellence, and power joyfully to obey it. But he is even more specific. When he wants a summary of our duties to our fellow men, he can do no better than to take the second table of the law. “Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other com-

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\* Romans 7 : 12.† *Ibid.*, 3 : 31.

mandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor : therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.”\* That is, if one loves his neighbor he will obey these precepts, and will find them easy. His obedience of them will be the test of his love. Again he says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right. Honor thy father and mother ; which is the first commandment with promise ; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”† How strange that a man who had declared the law to be “done away” should not only quote one of its precepts as still binding, but should even adapt to the children of Christians an attendant promise made expressly to the Jews ! Does this look as though nothing was to be brought over from the Jewish law for the regulation of our lives ? Paul was hardly so inconsistent as to quote thus from a law which had been abrogated as a rule of life. He is not alone in this practice. St. James says, “Who-soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if

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\* Romans 13 : 8-10.

† Ephesians 6 : 1-3.

thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." \* What of it, if the law is annulled? It does not matter if we violate obsolete laws. But James would have said that these laws were still binding, and that no one of them could be violated with impunity. His main point is the integrity of the law—the impossibility of wrenching out one of its members without destroying all. The way in which Paul and James and Peter and John urge upon the Christians to whom they write abstinence from certain specific sins, and the performance of specific duties, shows that those who believe in Christ have need of law. This general view of the relation of Christians to the law will help us to understand what is said by Paul concerning the law of the Sabbath. It is plain that no part of the moral law is abolished. This is still recognized as of binding force upon all. The law of the Sabbath is a part of it, and any apostolic precepts which *appear* hostile to the Sabbath must be interpreted in the light of this fact. Three passages are quoted from the Pauline epistles to show that this institution was to be a thing of the past. The first is in the epistle to the Galatians: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how

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\* James 2 : 10, 11.

turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.”\* This has been interpreted as meaning that all days are alike to the Christian, and that we subject ourselves to the yoke of Jewish bondage when we set apart one day in seven as sacred. A passage which is supposed to have a similar meaning is that in Romans, which reads, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*.”† A passage thought to be perfectly decisive is that which occurs in Colossians: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath *days*: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.”‡ We desire to give these words a perfectly fair interpretation. It is not our purpose to adjust them to a preconceived theory. But since they are frequently quoted to

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\* Galatians 4 : 9-11.

‡ Colossians 2 : 16, 17.

† Romans 14 : 5, 6.

prove that the Sabbath is abolished, it is necessary for us to give them a careful examination. We shall most readily arrive at their meaning by taking into account the intention of Paul in writing them. What was his purpose? What did he mean to accomplish by these words?

It is well known that the early churches were much troubled by Judaizers, who attempted to impose upon Gentile Christians the observances of the Jews. In many cases these churches had originated among the Jews, and these converts from Judaism were prone to think that Christianity was simply an *addition* to their former religion. Hence they kept up the observances required of them by the Mosaic law. Even circumcision, they insisted, should be continued; and it was in deference to them that Paul circumcised Timothy.\* They were equally decided in maintaining that the seventh day should be observed as the Sabbath, according to the Jewish law. So long as these observances were not directly antagonistic to Christianity, and were confined to Jewish converts, they were matters of indifference to the apostle. He was content to believe that they would gradually cease as the nature of Christianity was more fully appre-

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\* Acts 16 : 3.

hended. But when the attempt was made to require them of the Gentile converts, it became quite a different matter. Every such attempt Paul and his colleagues strongly opposed. Paul's refusal to circumcise\* Titus, because the latter was not a Jew, well illustrates his position. They would not allow Judaism, an obsolete system so far as its forms were concerned, to be extended by means of Christianity. This became one of the burning questions of the day. A partial account of this widespread conflict is recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts: "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."† Paul and Barnabas stoutly resisted them. Afterward, when the matter was reported at Jerusalem, "there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."‡ A meeting was called to deliberate upon the matter, and the decision finally reached was that the apostles should write to them "that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things

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\* Galatians 2 : 3.

† *Ibid.*, 15 : 5.

‡ Acts 15 : 1.



strangled, and *from* blood,"\* and that no other burden in this respect be laid upon them. But the work of the Judaizers went on, nevertheless, and Paul had frequent occasions to combat them. Among the requirements which they tried to impose upon the Gentiles was that the latter should observe the Jewish holy days and festivals. These were very numerous, including not only the weekly Sabbath and certain other "sabbaths" or rest-days, but also the festivals of the new moons and of the various appointed feasts; and the observance of them all would constitute a heavy burden. The idea inculcated was that by these appointments certain days had been made holy. It is this idea which Paul combats. The observance of times and seasons was something that belonged wholly to the Jewish dispensation. To mark certain days as holy because on them occurred certain Jewish ceremonies is the very spirit of Judaism. So Paul warns the Galatians, who had yielded to this influence more than the other churches, that in observing times and seasons they are dishonoring Christ and going back to an obsolete ritual. For the same reason he writes to the Christians at Rome that while any one who feels that he ought to observe these

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\* Acts 15 : 20, 29.

days can do so to the glory of God, he must not make his conscience a law for others, for now each man is at liberty to observe them or not as he pleases. The passage quoted from the letter to the Colossians does not differ from this except in the fact that it mentions specifically the Sabbath. In the original the word translated "Sabbath days" is in the plural number, and for this reason some have supposed that the reference is to the numerous rest-days of the Jews. If this were the case, it would be perfectly clear that Paul was opposing the doctrines of those who would force upon Christians the peculiar observances of the Jews. But it is generally agreed among translators and commentators that the weekly Sabbath is meant, the plural form being commonly used to designate that institution. But if he does here refer to the weekly Sabbath, does Paul mean to say that it is abolished? Not at all. In this case, as in the others, he is opposing the doctrines of the Judaizers. One of their strong points was that the Sabbath must be observed upon the seventh day of the week. But already the Gentile Christians were observing the first day, and Paul wishes to show that the insistence upon the seventh is a part of that Judaizing spirit which belittles Christ by looking for salvation to a useless ritual, and which sub-

verts Christian liberty by imposing upon the consciences of others useless burdens. While the Jewish Christians might, if they chose, observe both the seventh-day Sabbath and the Lord's day, they must not seek to force their views upon others. This is what they were doing. Paul was not writing to the Colossians against the observance of the Lord's day as a weekly Sabbath. The action of those who were "judging" them would not call for any such counsel as that. "It is certain that the persons who were judging them were pressing the duty of observing the Jewish Sabbath, not the Christian Lord's day." In such action there was nothing to prompt Paul to write against the observance of a weekly Sabbath. There is no intimation that the *institution* is to be abolished. It is only the idea that it must be kept on a particular day of the week because the Jews had kept it on that day, which he combats. No other view is consistent with his general purpose in writing these passages. He is contending against what is *Jewish*, and not against what is moral and universal. Keeping in mind this purpose, we cannot agree with Alford when he says, "It would have been quite impossible for the apostle to have spoken thus" \* if the

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\* Commentary, *in loco*.

Sabbath was to have been of perpetual obligation. It is only by disregarding the occasion which prompted Paul to write and his purpose in writing these words, that they can be interpreted as antagonistic to the Sabbath. Not to observe these is unfair to any writer, and violates the first principle of exegesis. Ellicott, who is better authority than Alford on a question of exegesis, says in his comments on the first of these passages, "It can scarcely be considered exegetically exact to urge this verse \* against any theory of a Christian Sabbath, when the apostle is only speaking of legal and Judaizing observances." In respect to the other passages, it has been well said by Dr. Riddle that Paul is certainly speaking of disputed matters, and there is no evidence that there was, at that time, any dispute about the observance of the Lord's day or Christian Sabbath.† It is extremely improbable that he would thus summarily abolish an institution which had existed from the beginning, which had been re-established with special sanctions in the moral law, which Christ had said was made for man, and which he had taken great pains to clear from misconceptions and abuses. If his words

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\* Galatians 4 : 10.

† Lange on Romans, p. 418, note.

were capable of no other interpretation, we should be forced to accept this view; but, taking them in their connection, this is not even their natural meaning. He is combating something quite different from the institution of the Sabbath. We are strengthened in this opinion when we remember that at this very time Paul and his associates were instructing the followers of Christ to meet for worship on a particular day, and thus marked it as the Lord's day—a day made holy to him. Would he write against the Sabbath while himself observing the essentials of it? And this fact shows also the error of supposing that Paul meant to teach by these words that Christians have no need of a Sabbath, since all days are alike holy to them. We shall have occasion to notice this theory again,\* but may say here that it is not founded upon the practice and teaching of the apostles. The denial that any special sanctity attaches to "times and seasons" is not a denial that men need seasons of release from toil and set times for worship. This need is deep-seated in the nature of man, and none knew it better than Paul. The most advanced Christians not only need such times, but most thoroughly appreciate and enjoy them. The result of trying

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\* Chapter XI.

to make all days alike holy is that all become secularized. He who will have a Sabbath on every day will have no Sabbath at all.

Our conclusion is that there is nothing in the writings of the apostles which, when fairly interpreted, implies the abrogation of the Sabbath. They do hint at certain changes in the form of the institution; but the law of the Sabbath, in its essence, is not repealed. They honored the moral law as the highest expression of God's will, and say no word to indicate that the law of the Sabbath was not a part of it. Thus both Christ and his inspired apostles have given their sanction to this institution. They have not taken away this choice gift of God to men. Rather, they have enlarged and ennobled it, and shown us how to make it a greater blessing than it ever was to the Jews. The law still stands and is binding upon us, but is no longer a burden. We have learned in Christ how to make the Sabbath "a delight."



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH DAY.

This day my Saviour rose,  
And did enclose this light for his,  
That, as each beast his manger knows,  
Man might not of his fodder miss.  
Christ hath took in this piece of ground,  
And made a garden there for those  
Who want herbs for their wound.

GEORGE HERBERT.

ACCEPTING the conclusion that the fourth commandment is still in force, it may very properly be asked, "Why then do not Christians obey it by keeping holy the seventh day of the week, as it directs? By what right is this plain precept disregarded and the first day of the week observed?" This question is a natural one, and unless a satisfactory answer can be given, the Christian world must stand convicted of error. The fact that the observance of the first day of the week is so nearly universal and has been of such long continuance is very significant. It suggests that there must have been some good and sufficient reason for the change. Too much should not be made of this, for the Church has sanctioned many false doctrines and been

tainted by many corrupt practices; but no error of great magnitude has prevailed almost without question for eighteen centuries. We have taken the custom of keeping the Sabbath on the first day of the week as we found it; and while this does not exempt us from the duty of inquiry, it throws upon those who question our course "the burden of proof." The Seventh-day Baptists believe that to separate the Sabbath from the day on which the Jews observed it is virtually to destroy the institution; hence they strongly hold that it should be observed upon the seventh day of the week. Others say that if the fourth commandment is binding upon us at all, the part which designates the day is binding also. But this, they say, plainly has been abrogated; hence the Sabbath is done away, and we must look for other grounds on which to base the observance of the Lord's day.\* These parties agree as to the necessity of a weekly day of rest and worship. They must not be reckoned as enemies of the Sabbath, and it is unfair for opponents to quote their views as though they sought the destruction of the institution. But they are widely at variance as to the grounds on which

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\* F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, first series, p. 116; George B. Bacon, "Sabbath Question," p. 179; Hessey, "Sunday," lecture v.

they base its observance. We believe that both positions are untenable, and that a persistent attempt to maintain either must result in an increased disregard of the Sabbath. Though their conclusions are so different, the argument of each proceeds from the fundamental error that the Sabbath has not been transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week. It devolves upon us to show that such a change was made, and by what authority.

The *authority* must be sought in the words or in the example of the inspired apostles. Up to the time of Christ's death, no change had been made in the day. We would not expect to find one previous to that time; for the Church of Christ was not really born until the day of Pentecost. He had laid the foundation, but the superstructure was to be erected by his inspired apostles. They were appointed by Christ to organize the Church, and to legislate for it in respect to all matters of detail. That they would not deviate from his plans and purpose was implied in their inspiration; at the same time he left them to be the organizers and legislators of the Church. He said to Peter—not in his personal capacity, but as leader of the twelve—"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; . . . and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall

be loosed in heaven.”\* That this was meant for all is proved by its subsequent repetition to the twelve. Again, we read that he said, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whosoever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.”† It is generally understood that these words gave to the apostles supreme authority in legislating for the Church. One of Christ’s parting promises to them was, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”‡ The apostles did exercise the authority thus conferred upon them. They decided, in a meeting at Jerusalem, how much of Jewish law should be laid upon Gentile converts;§ they gave directions concerning discipline;|| they pronounced anathemas upon the incorrigible;¶ they even exercised the power of death, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira.\*\* There can be no question about their authority to make a change in such a matter as the particular day of the week on which the Sabbath should be observed.

So far as the record shows, they did not, however, give any explicit command enjoining the abandonment of the seventh-day Sabbath, and its

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\* Matthew 16 : 19.

† John 20 : 23.

‡ *Ibid.*, 16 : 13.

§ Acts 15 : 23–29.

|| 1 Corinthians 5 : 13.

¶ Galatians 1 : 8 ; 1 Timothy 1 : 20.

\*\* Acts 5 : 5–10.

observance on the first day of the week. If they made the change, it is to be learned from what they did and from directions which they gave to the churches on related matters. But this is in keeping with their method of effecting other changes. There is no record that the early Christians were commanded not to circumcise their children, not to eat the passover, and not to offer sacrifices; and yet they felt at liberty to abandon these and other ceremonies which were peculiar to the Jews, and we do not hesitate to follow their example. On what authority do we neglect these things, which the Jews were so strictly commanded to observe? On the authority of apostolic example and of fair inference from what they taught concerning the nature of Christianity and the relation of the Christian to the Jewish Church. These things disappeared because they were shown not to be in keeping with the religion of Christ in its nature and purpose. Here we do not question the authority of apostolic example. In like manner, if it can be shown that they gave up the seventh-day Sabbath and transferred to the first day of the week such of its duties and privileges as were in keeping with the spirit of Christianity, and forbade Jewish Christians to impose its observance upon their Gentile brethren, we need not, in this also,

hesitate to follow their example. If they acted with good reason and under inspiration, there can be little doubt that we are bound to imitate them in whatever pertains to our conduct as Christians.

It is not claimed that the apostles began to keep the Sabbath on the first day of the week immediately after the death of Christ. The change was a gradual one. This was the case with the Jewish converts in many of their practices. A sudden and violent change was impossible. It was only as the nature of Christianity was gradually learned that the old rites and ceremonies were dropped one by one. Thus the disciples in Jerusalem went to the temple to worship;\* they continued to attend the services which were held in connection with the sacrifices;† Paul circumcised Timothy,‡ and he afterward made a vow which involved the offering of a sacrifice.§ It was in perfect keeping with their general course that the change in the Sabbath day was gradual; and this does not make it any the less certain that such a change took place in their own practice, and, by the authority of their example, in that of the Jewish converts who constituted so large a part of the early churches.

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\* Acts 2 : 46.

† *Ibid.*, 16 : 3.

‡ *Ibid.*, 3 : 1.

§ *Ibid.*, 21 : 26 ; comp. Numbers 6 : 3-18.



As we shall see, there is reason to believe that most of the Gentile Christians never observed the seventh-day Sabbath at all.

Was there any reason for such a change? If the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit when they made it, we need not ask for their reason. But since the reality of the change is disputed, we may say that if good reasons for it can be discovered, they furnish presumptive proof that it really took place under divine direction. One such reason can undoubtedly be found in the abuses which had gathered around the Jewish Sabbath. Christ would not burden his Church with such a Sabbath as the rabbis had made; and the easiest way to get rid of these abuses was to change the day. Again, the Gentile churches would never have accepted the Sabbath of the Jews as they had come to observe it. Says Neander, "They rejected the Sabbath which the Jewish Christians celebrated, in order to avoid the risk of mingling Judaism and Christianity, and because another event associated more closely another day with their Christian feelings."\* There was no reason why they should not have a day of their own on which the real Sabbath could be just as well kept, and

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\* "Planting and Training of the Christian Church," p. 159.

on which Christ, their risen Lord, could be especially honored. It is easy to see that this difficulty might have come to be one of great magnitude and long continuance. Moreover, Christians were not to observe the Sabbath precisely as the Jews had kept it before these abuses arose and while they were acting in accordance with the divine law. Certain minor changes were to be made in the manner of observance, and these could be most easily brought about by changing the day. The transference of the seventh-day Sabbath to the Christian Church would have implied the transference of all its features, and this was not to be. Great pains were taken to make it clear that Christianity was not a continuance of Judaism, though embodying whatever was moral and permanent in the latter. The principal object of the Sabbath from the beginning was the promotion of man's religious welfare. Let us not forget that "the Sabbath was made for man." Now a change in the day, which would preserve all the good features of the Jewish Sabbath, carry over to the new day the associations which lent sanctity to the old so far as Christians were concerned, add a new feature such as we have in the memorial of our Lord's resurrection, and at the same time make it easy to rid the Sabbath of its abuses, would

most certainly increase the value of it as a means of sanctification. These are positive reasons why such a change was to be expected. Further on in the discussion we shall see that there was nothing in the nature of the institution to forbid the change.

We do not say that the apostles saw these reasons and were governed by them. We offer them in explanation of the fact that they were led by the Spirit to make the change, and as suggesting a probability that it would be made. The motives by which they were consciously governed will appear as we study the history of the change. They were led to observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath and gradually to abandon the seventh by a variety of occurrences which seemed to them to warrant the change, and which, when carefully studied, leave no doubt in our minds that they acted in accordance with the divine intention. What were those occurrences?

The first of them was the resurrection of our Lord. Each of the evangelists mentions very particularly the fact that this took place upon the first day of the week, showing that they felt it important to mark the day.\* The apostles could not but look upon this as a day of glo-

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\* Matthew 28 : 1 ; Mark 16 : 2 ; Luke 24 : 1 ; John 20 : 1.

rious triumph for the cause to which they had given their lives. It was the day on which they were delivered from temporary sorrow and despair, and on which the strongest hopes they had built on Christ were more than realized. As they came to understand better the significance of the resurrection, they regarded the day on which it occurred as the day of deliverance for the world from the bondage of sin. They saw in it a deliverance as much greater than that of their ancestors from Egyptian bondage as the whole race is greater than one nation, as eternity is greater than time. Any one who reads the sermons and letters of the apostles, and notices how important a place the resurrection has in their thoughts—notices how they make everything turn upon it, declaring that our faith is vain if Christ be not risen—hardly needs to ask whether these men will be likely to commemorate the day on which it occurred.

But they might not have given the day the prominence they did if Christ had not distinguished it, by choosing it for most of his appearances to them and other disciples. On the same day on which he arose, he appeared no less than five times: to Mary Magdalene,\* to the other

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\* John 20:11-18.

women,\* to Peter,† to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus,‡ to ten of the apostles gathered in a room at Jerusalem.§ No wonder that they ever after regarded this day as peculiarly memorable. In their thought and in the thought of all believers in Christ it had been honored above every other day. But the fact that Christ rose on that day and manifested himself so often to the disciples would not necessarily imply a purpose on his part to honor it, had it not been for subsequent occurrences. For six days he did not appear to them at all, so far as the record shows; but “on the eighth day, or, as *we* should say, on the seventh day afterwards,”|| he appeared to the eleven as they were gathered in a closed room. This meeting is itself significant, “for already the resurrection had made the first day of the week sacred to the hearts of the apostles.”|| Still more significant was the appearance of Christ on that day, after an absence of six days. We can hardly avoid the conviction that he meant to mark the day with peculiar honor.

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\* Matthew 28 : 9, 10.

† Luke 24 : 34 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 5.

‡ Luke 24 : 13-31.

§ Mark 16 : 14 ; Luke 24 : 36-49 ; John 20 : 19-23.

|| Farrar's “Life of Christ,” one-volume edition, p. 459.

The next great event which occurred on this day was the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. It has been claimed that this did not take place on Sunday, but on Saturday; but a careful reckoning of the time from the crucifixion shows this to be a mistake. We can hardly afford space here for an extended discussion of the methods of counting which have been employed to secure these different results, but may take the condensed statement of Dr. Philip Schaff, with which scholars now generally agree. He says, "Pentecost fell on the fiftieth day after the day following the Paschal Sabbath, and was therefore reckoned, according to the common acceptance, from the 16th of Nisan, when the corn-harvest began. . . . It is certain and on all hands admitted that Christ died on a Friday. But while this Friday, according to the Synoptical Gospels, seems to have been the 15th of Nisan, an unbiased interpretation of several passages in the Gospel of John would make it the 14th. If, now, the death of Jesus fell on a Friday and on the 14th of Nisan, and if we number from this Sunday, according to the direction of Leviticus 23: 15, fifty days, we have a Sunday again for the Pentecost. . . . This view is supported, also, by the primitive and universal custom of the Christian Church. The Church always celebrated



Pentecost on Sunday.”\* To this we may add the testimony of Dr. Hessey, who says, “On the day of Pentecost, which in that year occurred on the first day of the week, ‘they were with one accord in one place.’”† Thus the first day of the week was made “the birthday of the Church.” The meeting of the disciples indicates that they already regarded it as a memorable day. This great event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—the greatest event that has occurred since the resurrection of Christ—gave it additional sacredness. The promise of Christ to send them the Comforter and to endue the apostles with power was now fulfilled. “The ministration of the Spirit,” more glorious than any that preceded it, had begun. The gift of the Spirit, which includes all other gifts to the Church, had been bestowed. The provision for the redemption and sanctification of the Church was now complete, and nothing remained but for them to go forth, in obedience to their risen Lord’s command, and “preach the gospel to every creature,” certain that it would finally win universal triumph. It was hardly possible that the day marked by two such events as the resurrection of Christ and the miraculous

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\* “History of the Apostolic Church,” p. 192, and note, p. 193.

† “Sunday,” p. 30.

gift of the Spirit should not be celebrated by those who felt that in these two events they had received blessings which exalted them above the rank of earthly kings, and assured them of a glorious destiny in the eternal future.

An examination of their words and actions shows most conclusively that they attached great sacredness to this day. The fact that all of the evangelists, in their accounts of the resurrection, use the expression "the first day of the week" is significant. The earliest of these Gospels—Matthew—was written several years after the death of Christ, and that of John not till at least forty years after. Previous to the resurrection and at the time, it was spoken of always as occurring on "the third day." This change suggests that the first day of the week had come to be very prominent in the minds of the evangelists when the Gospels were written. The same form of expression occurs in other places\* in such a way as to indicate that it had become common.

The Christians, at a very early date, were accustomed to hold their religious meetings on that day. The custom seems to have been begun a week from the day of the resurrection,† though

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\* Acts 20 : 7 ; 1 Corinthians 16 : 2.

† John 20 : 26.

a single instance of the kind would not make this certain. But there can be no doubt concerning their habit at a later date. We read in Acts, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."\* The plain implication of these words is that it was the *custom* of Christians to meet on that day for the Lord's Supper. It is not likely that this ordinance stood alone and was observed without other religious services. The Christians at Jerusalem were poor and persecuted, and the churches that were better situated were moved to take collections for their relief. In writing to the church at Corinth on the matter, Paul says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."† From what can be learned of the method of taking collections among the early Christians it is evident that Paul desires them to bring in their offerings week by week and leave them in the hands of the proper church officers. Here, then, we find a regular weekly meeting on "the first day." It is extremely improbable that there was such a meeting at Corinth and not in the other churches.

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\* Acts 20 : 7.

† 1 Corinthians 16 : 2.

They all had regular meetings, which were separate from the Jewish assemblies. Christians were urged to attend them. The writer of Hebrews reminds them of this duty—"not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."\* It is natural to suppose that they occurred upon some fixed day, and we have seen indications that this was the first day of the week. John speaks of this as "the Lord's day." He says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."† If he had meant the Sabbath, he would have called it by that name. His expression is analogous to "the sabbath of the Lord," which we find in the Old Testament; but it cannot mean the same day. He cannot be speaking of the judgment day, for the remainder of his expression does not consist with that idea. He is referring to some well-known day; and we have already discovered strong reasons for believing that it could be no other than the first day of the week. His calling it "the Lord's day" shows that it had been made sacred in honor of Christ. His saying that he was "in the Spirit" on that day indicates that he was using it for religious meditation.

Gathering up the results of our examination,

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\* Hebrews 10 : 25.

† Revelation 1 : 10.

we find that peculiar honor was bestowed upon the first day of the week by the resurrection of our Lord, by his appearance to the disciples, and by the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit; that the evangelists and apostles speak of it as though it had been elevated to a position of sacred importance in their minds; and that the early Christians were accustomed to meet on it for the Lord's Supper and for religious worship. How far the Jewish converts to Christ abandoned the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is not clear. It is probable, from certain hints concerning their attendance at the temple and the synagogues, that they quite generally observed it during the time of the apostles. But it must have been understood that the day was no longer binding. It is not possible to interpret in any other way Paul's words, which we have already quoted, but which may be repeated in this connection: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*."\* "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect

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\* Romans 14 : 5, 6.

of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days* : which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body *is* of Christ.”\* These words are directed against that which was distinctly Jewish in the laws and ordinances of the old dispensation. They admit of no other interpretation than that men were at liberty to observe or not to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath. It was not to be imposed upon the Gentile converts. But there is not a word to indicate that the Sabbath as an *institution* was abrogated. If the particular day was a matter of indifference, and the Sabbath was still to be kept, *when* should it be observed ? Manifestly, there could have been no intention on the part of the apostles to have some Christians keep one day and some another. Neither would they be likely to order that all should keep two days. For reasons which seemed to them good, they had fixed upon “the first day of the week” for the Sabbath day. If they had celebrated the resurrection of Christ once a month or once a year, there would have been no indication of a change in the Sabbath day ; but a *weekly* celebration reveals a purpose to substitute the first day for the seventh. The correspondence of periods reduces the matter to a certainty. Put

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\* Colossians 2 : 16, 17.



the two facts that they asserted the particular day to be of no consequence and that they hallowed the first day of the week over against each other, and any other conclusion is impossible. That this was understood by Christians of their own and later times to be their purpose will appear from an examination of the history of the early churches, which we will attempt in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH DAY—CONTINUED.

Christ was crucified and buried on the sixth day. He lay all the seventh day in the grave. The seventh-day Sabbath was buried with him, and *remains buried*; for he arose from the dead on the first day of the week, when the seventh-day Sabbath was past.—DR. N. WEST.

WE are under no obligation to follow the example of Christians who lived in any age subsequent to that of the apostles. Perversions of Christian doctrine and corrupt practices sprang up so early and prevailed so widely as to make such an imitation altogether unsafe. Why, then, should it concern us to know anything about the Christians of the first and second centuries? We study their history because it throws additional light upon the teaching and example of the apostles. If it can be shown clearly that any custom prevailed very soon after their death, we have good reason to believe that it rested upon a basis of apostolic authority. Especially would this be the case if the custom was universal, or nearly so, among the churches; for the origin of unscriptural practices can usually be traced to some particular locality. A brief and cursory exam-

ination of the history of the early Christians will reveal the following three important facts : First, that Sunday was observed as a holy day—a Christian festival—during the first and second centuries. Second, that the Jewish converts to Christ were in the habit of observing both Saturday and Sunday as holy days—the one because they thought it commanded in the law of Moses, the other because it was the custom of all Christians to observe it in commemoration of Christ's resurrection. “ Those churches which were composed of Jewish Christians, though they admitted with the rest the festival of Sunday, yet retained also that of the Sabbath.”\* But it was soon felt that such an arrangement involved more days of rest than could be afforded in this world of work. It was not consistent with the proper performance of life's duties. To observe two Sabbaths was going beyond any law, human or divine. Third, that thus it gradually came to pass that the seventh-day observance was abandoned by nearly all Christians, and the substitution of Sunday in its place became complete. To find confirmation of these statements let us look at some of the writings of the fathers. For the convenience of the general reader, we quote mainly from translations

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\* Neander : Church History, vol. i. p. 296.

of these writings which may be found in the "Ante-Nicene Library" and in "The Apostolic Fathers." Both of these may be regarded as entirely trustworthy reproductions of the originals.

Whatever may be said of the doctrinal value of these works, it is quite certain that their authors would not make false statements about matters of common knowledge in their own time, for such statements would have exposed them to the contempt and ridicule of their contemporaries. Ignatius was a disciple of John, and died at an advanced age in the year 115. In his "Epistle to the Magnesians" he says, "If, therefore, those that were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's day, on which also our life has sprung up again by him and by his death . . . how can we live without him?"\* The genuineness of this is now generally admitted. The text is somewhat obscure, but it indicates plainly enough that already the Jewish Christians were giving up the observance of the seventh day and that the Lord's day was generally regarded as sacred. The "Epistle of Barnabas" was probably not written by the companion of Paul

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\* To the Magnesians, sec. 9, Ant. Nic. Lib., vol. i. p. 180.

who bore that name, but it was certainly in existence soon after the close of the first century. In this the writer says, "We [Christians] keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead."\* The first day of the week was then often called the eighth because it came next after the seventh. If any doubt should exist as to which day is meant here, the allusion to the resurrection is conclusive. A letter written to the emperor Trajan by Pliny the younger, about A.D. 112, who was then governor of Pontus and Bithynia, has often been quoted in proof that it was the custom of the early Christians to meet on stated days for worship and the Lord's Supper. He was ordered to crush out the new religion, and says that, when brought before him for examination, "they affirmed that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on *a stated day*, before it was light, and sing among themselves by turns a hymn to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft or robbery or adultery, never to break a promise, or to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. When

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\* Epistle, sec. 15, Ant. Nic. Lib., vol. i. p. 128.

these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then come together again to a meal, which they ate in common without any disorder.”\* This testimony is especially valuable, as it comes from a heathen witness. The antiquity of the recently-discovered manuscript known as the “Teaching of the Apostles” is disputed, but it unquestionably belongs to a very early period. So many eminent scholars have agreed in placing it in the first half of the second century that we may quote it in this connection. In the fourteenth chapter we read, “But every Lord’s day do ye gather yourselves together and break bread, and give thanksgiving, after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.” This is part of the instruction given to early Christians with regard to their religious services. It was for Jewish converts as well as for others. The mention of the Lord’s day, and the entire absence of any reference to the seventh-day Sabbath, are significant and almost conclusive on the point we are now considering. Justin Martyr, who wrote about 138 A.D., says, “On the day called Sunday all [Christians] who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of

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\* Epistles, x. 97.



the prophets are read as long as the time permits ; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts them to the imitation of these good things." Then follows a full description of their worship, including the collection for the needy. He continues, "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead."\* In another work† he says, "The command to circumcise infants on the eighth day was a type of the true circumcision by which we are circumcised from error and wickedness through our Lord Jesus Christ, who arose from the dead on the first day of the week ; therefore, it remains the first and chief of all days." While the reference to circumcision is fanciful, the passage gives in the reference to the resurrection the reason which was then generally accepted for observing the Lord's day. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons A.D. 178, is quoted by an early subsequent writer as saying, "This custom of not bending the knee on Sunday is a symbol of the resurrection, through

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\* Apology I., 67 ; Ant. Nic. Lib. ii. pp. 65, 66 ; "Apostolic Fathers," p. 179.

† "Dialogue with Trypho," sec. 41.

which we have been set free, by the grace of Christ, from sins and from death, which has been put to death under him. Now this custom took its rise from apostolic times, as the blessed Irenæus, the martyr and bishop of Lyons, declares in his treatise ‘On Easter,’ in which he makes mention of Pentecost also; upon which we do not bend the knee, because it is of equal significance with the Lord’s day, for the reason already alleged concerning it.”\* To understand this last reference it must be remembered that, among the early Christians, the Lord’s day was a day of rejoicing, on which it was improper to kneel. It will be noticed that Irenæus seems to exalt Pentecost by making it equal to the Lord’s day, showing that the latter was held in high estimation. Eusebius, the great church historian (262–340), quotes Irenæus as saying “that the mystery of our Lord’s resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than the Lord’s day; and that on this day alone we should observe the close of the paschal fast.”† This remark originated in a discussion on the question whether Easter should be celebrated in connection with the Jewish passover, on whatever day that might happen

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\* Ant. Nic. Lib., vol. ix. pp. 162, 163.

† Eccl. Hist., vol. ii. p. 256.

to fall, or on the Lord's day ; but it shows the regard in which the latter was held and the reason for observing it. Tertullian, the great bishop of Carthage, who lived and wrote in the latter part of the second century and first part of the third, has a number of passages on the Lord's day. He says, " We have nothing to do with the Sabbath or the other Jewish festivals, much less with those of the heathen. We have our own solemnities, the Lord's day for instance and Pentecost. As the heathen confine themselves to their festivals and do not observe ours, let us confine ourselves to ours and not meddle with those belonging to them." \* In another work he says, " If we give Sunday to joy, it is from a very different reason than the worship of the sun ; we are also separate from those who spend Saturday in idleness and feasting, departing from the custom of the Jews of which they are ignorant." † Regarding the method of observing Sunday he says, " We consider it wrong to fast on the Lord's day, or to pray kneeling during its continuance." ‡ In his treatise " On Prayer " § he makes these further remarks on the proper observance of the day : " But we ( just as we have received ), only on the

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\* On Idolatry, chap. 14.

† Apologetics, chap. 16.

‡ On the Soldier's Crown, chap. 3.

§ Chapter 21.

day of the Lord's resurrection ought to guard not only against kneeling, but every posture and office of anxiety; deferring even our business, lest we give place to the devil." Here we find a plain intimation that no secular work should be done on the Lord's day. It was probably on this account that Neander says of Tertullian, "we find in him indications of the transfer of the law of the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday."\* The testimony of Tertullian is important, for in his voluminous writings references† to the Lord's day and to its proper observance are so frequent that there can be no doubt about the manner in which it was regarded by the Christians of his times.

Those to which we have called attention are by no means the only references to the Lord's day which can be found in the Christian writings of the first two centuries; but they are sufficient to show that it was then a day of worship and of religious festivity. We limit our inquiry to this period. If we were writing a history of the Lord's day, it would be necessary to make citations from the writings of later periods; but our sole purpose has been to show how the early Christians—those

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\* Church Hist., vol. i. p. 259.

† For some of Tertullian's references to the Lord's day, English readers may consult *Ant. Nic. Lib.*, vol. xi. pp. 85, 162, 163, 199, 449, 450, and vol. xv. p. 428.

nearest the apostles—regarded the day. The witnesses we have so far examined are uniform in testifying that they kept the first day of the week as a holy day. It is a significant fact that there is no record of any differences or disputes on this subject among the early Christians.

But how, meantime, did they regard the Jewish Sabbath day? The evidence all goes to show that the Gentile Christians felt themselves under no obligation to observe it, and that the Jewish converts gradually abandoned its observance. The “Epistle of Barnabas” says that the Lord abolished Jewish sacrifices, new moons and Sabbaths, and represents Christ as saying, “Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me.”\* Ignatius, perhaps the earliest post-apostolic writer, speaks of Christians as no longer observing the seventh-day Sabbath.† Justin Martyr said, “We too would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts, if we did not know for what reason they are enjoined upon you. How is it, Trypho, that we would not observe those rites which would not harm us? I speak of fleshly circumcision, and Sabbaths and feasts.”‡ This plainly

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\* Ant. Nic. Lib., vol. i. pp. 103, 128.

† *Ibid.*, p. 150.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 139.

enough implies that the seventh-day Sabbath was no longer considered obligatory. The remark we have already quoted from Tertullian, "we have nothing to do with Sabbaths or other Jewish festivals," indicates that in his time it was disregarded by Gentile Christians at least. But he is more explicit and emphatic. In his treatise "On Idolatry,"\* he says, "The Holy Spirit upbraids the Jews with their holy days. 'Your sabbaths, and new moons, and ceremonies,' says he, 'my soul hateth.'" Again, "He who argues for Sabbath-keeping and circumcision must show that Adam and Abel, and the just of the old time, observed these things."† Perhaps his most explicit statement is this, "The observance of the Sabbath is being demonstrated to have been temporary."‡ He is not speaking of the Lord's day, for that had its own distinct name and was not then called the Sabbath as sometimes with us, but only of the seventh-day or Jewish Sabbath. It was this the observance of which was being demonstrated to be temporary. How long Jewish Christians continued to observe it cannot be accurately determined, but they soon came to be so small a minority of the whole Church that, probably, such

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\* Chapter 14.

† Against the Jews, chap. 2.

‡ Ant. Nic. Lib., vol. xviii. p. 211.



observance was not common long after the end of the period we have been considering.

We might quote further testimony, but surely it is not necessary. It all bears in one direction and forces us to one conclusion. It is characterized by a remarkable uniformity. Every statement bearing upon the subject, that can be discovered in the writings of the fathers, is to the effect that the Christians of the first two centuries were accustomed to keep holy the first day of the week, and that most of them regarded themselves at liberty not to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus they strengthen the conclusion we have reached from our examination of the example and teachings of the apostles, that the latter intended to transfer the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. The Christians of their own time and of the age immediately following certainly understood that to be their purpose. Those who were in such immediate connection with them could hardly have made a mistake concerning the import of their words and actions. We may, then, consider it as settled that we have apostolic authority for disregarding the claims of the seventh day and keeping the Sabbath upon the first day of the week.

But does not such a change involve the destruction of the Sabbath? It does not affect it.

in the least. Here we must carefully distinguish between the *institution* and the *day*. The Sabbath is one thing, and the day on which it shall be observed is quite another thing. A careful consideration of the facts in the case will make this evident, and also show that the day may be changed without affecting the institution.

So far as the element of time is considered in the fourth commandment, the proportion of days is all that is essential. There is nothing in Scripture or in common sense to contradict this view. It is the fixing upon one day as more holy than another that Paul, when writing on the subject, expressly condemns. In the nature of the case, there is nothing that forbids putting the Sabbath upon any day in the week, if good reasons could be given for selecting it. The fourth commandment itself does not fix the day of the week on which the Sabbath shall be observed. It simply says, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." There is no allusion to the week here, or to any particular day from which the counting shall begin. It is simply required that every seventh day shall be kept as a day of rest and a holy day. The most precise literalist could hardly find more in these

words. Certainly the command as it here appears is obeyed by one who works six days and then uses the seventh for rest and religious purposes. If it is to be interpreted in any other way, obedience to it is practically impossible. Exact identity of time for all men cannot be secured. Travel around the world from east to west, keeping every seventh day, and you will find, at the end of your journey, that your Sabbath has somehow got changed from Sunday to Saturday. Go around in the opposite direction and it will transfer itself to Monday. Go into the Arctic regions and you must take simply a seventh of the time, or keep as a Sabbath every seventh year. These facts show that it is contrary to nature to insist upon the seventh day of the week as the only possible Sabbath day.

But this is not all. There is good reason to believe that the primitive Sabbath was kept on the first day of the week. It should be noted that God's rest-day was man's first day of existence. It is a significant fact that the day which was especially honored among those ancient peoples who had the septenary division of time was the first day of the week. The very name of the day, Sun-day, the day consecrated to the principal of the heavenly bodies, is a memento of this custom. The equivalent of this exists in the

languages of all these peoples, and it was applied by all to the same day of the week. Nor was it improbable that the Sabbath of the Jews would be appointed on a day different from the principal holy day of other nations. There was good reason for such a change. They were a peculiar people and were to be separate from the heathen. Their Sabbath was to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt as well as the creation of the world. Some have supposed that it came on the seventh day from the first fall of manna. However this may have been, it is not hard to believe that God appointed it on a new day. The evidence on this point is not perfectly conclusive, but it is strong enough\* to raise a doubt whether those who insist on the seventh-day Sabbath are not worse Judaizers than has generally been supposed. There is certainly presumptive evidence that the Jews, in their isolation, would have a Sabbath day of their own, and that Christ, who is to be the Saviour and King of all men, would restore the original Sabbath day. But whether there has been one change or two, the institution has not been thereby affected.

Every purpose for which the Sabbath was in-

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\* It is well presented in "The Primitive Sabbath Restored," a pamphlet by Rev. James Johnson.

stituted can be accomplished as well upon one day as another. The proportion of time—six days of labor followed by the day of rest—secures the commemoration of God's creative week. It makes no conceivable difference when we begin to count; this observance stands as an imperishable monument of creation, reminding men that the universe is God's handiwork. This purpose of the Sabbath is not violated or impaired in the least by changing it from the seventh to the first day of the week. But the change makes it commemorative of another and a greater event than the creation. This was redemption day—the day on which a fallen race received assurance that a way of salvation had been provided. Previous to that sin had reigned rampant in the world, and had made creation little more than a source of misery. That day changed the tears of the world to laughter. It changed the world from a hearse to a triumphal chariot. It took the blackness of despair out of human hearts and filled them with the light of a great hope. It assured us that God had not utterly cast off the race and left us to perish. Now we may look for “a new heaven and a new earth.” Now we may hope that the real purpose of creation—the fitting of intelligent beings for eternal service of God and eternal glory and blessedness—may

be accomplished. How much greater is redemption than creation! God made the world by the breath of his power; but when he would save sinful man he must give his only begotten Son to die on the cross. He dies and is laid in the tomb, and the hope of the world seems to die with him. But no! He lives again, and men take up the song of hope and joy. His resurrection is so fraught with solemn and ecstatic meaning for us all that the day on which he rose must remain ever memorable. It is impossible for us to make too much of this event. It was because the apostles saw, as we do not, the transcendent importance of the resurrection that they gave Sunday precedence over the Jewish Sabbath day. But while it commemorates this greatest of all events in the world's history, it in no less degree commemorates the creation of the world, since it comes in regular round after six days of labor.

The Sabbath may be of exactly the same service to man upon the first day of the week as upon the seventh. So long as its real purpose is served, what conceivable difference does it make on what day it is observed? God is not an arbitrary and tyrannical taskmaster whose precepts originate in mere freaks of fancy. The Sabbath he requires us to observe is one which will promote our welfare, and such a Sabbath is



entirely independent of any particular day of the week.

The correctness of this opinion receives confirmation from an unexpected source. A Hebrew rabbi delivered in the city of Philadelphia\* a course of Sunday lectures for the instruction and edification of those of his people who could not, on account of their occupation, attend the synagogue on Saturday. The movement created some excitement among the Hebrews of Philadelphia, and gave rise to various rumors. A reporter of the *Record*, a daily newspaper of that city, called upon the rabbi, who made the following remarks in the course of the interview : “As a matter of fact, however, there is no reason why the Jews should not observe a Sunday as a holy day of rest, and observe it as such instead of Saturday. Any day of the week might be selected as holy day, or Sabbath, without doing violence to the conscience. The command was, ‘six days shalt thou labor.’ One day of the week was to be a day of rest, and without affecting the Jewish religion, any other day than Saturday would do as well. The acceptance of Sunday, therefore, if that is what we propose, would not be fatal to our religion. But we only

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\* Winter of 1883-84.

have in view a system of lectures by which the Jews who cannot observe the Sabbath can be instructed on Sundays. I think that this is right. A Jew in a Christian country like this is in a dilemma. If he does not work six days, he commits a sin; for the command is, 'six days *shalt* thou labor.' The law does not allow him to labor on Sunday, therefore he must labor on Saturday. One day he must also observe as holy day. He cannot observe Saturday. We propose to give him a chance to observe Sunday. The Jewish wives and children continue to observe Saturday. It is not thought of changing that. We only want to give the Saturday workers a chance. But I do not believe, if we should even accept Sunday for the Sabbath, that any great harm could come to Judaism." This is a remarkable admission for a Hebrew rabbi to make, and indicates an unexpected degree of enlightenment and liberality on the subject. When a Hebrew who does not believe in Christ at all, who has no desire to commemorate the resurrection or the consummation of Christ's redemptive work because he scornfully rejects both, who has the influence of thousands of generations of his people to make him prejudiced in favor of the seventh-day Sabbath, and who takes into account only the nature of the institution, admits that the

true Sabbath can be observed as well upon one day as another, how preposterous it is for Christians to say that there can be no real Sabbath which is not kept upon the seventh day of the week!

We may adopt it as a settled conclusion that the Sabbath is independent of the day on which it is observed, and that the change of day has in no wise affected the institution. If there were good reasons for the change, nothing in the nature of the case interfered with making it. We have seen that there were such reasons in the purpose of our Lord to clear the Sabbath of the abuses which the Pharisees had bound upon it, in the necessity of adapting it to the situation of the Gentile Christians by removing their prejudices against what was distinctively Jewish, and in the divine intention to make the day commemorative of the resurrection as well as of the completed work of creation. The day was changed, but the institution remains intact.

Three points which have been in dispute seem to be settled by our examination of the reasons for this change, the authority on which it was made and the absence of any effect produced by it upon the Sabbath itself. First, those Christians who insist that we ought to keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath have no good reason

for their position. They are adherents to "the letter" which "killeth," and totally disregard "the spirit" which "maketh alive." They are worse Judaizers than the Jews themselves. They exalt that which is wholly non-essential above other things of vastly greater importance. Conscientious and earnest as they may be in their persistent and vigorous efforts to bring all Christians to their way of thinking, we cannot but feel that they are wasting their energies in trying to attain an object which, if attained, would be of no value. On the contrary, it would be a positive injury to Christians if they should all go back to the seventh-day Sabbath; for in that case they would lose what is distinctively *Christian* in the Sabbath as we now have it. To use a familiar figure, they would turn back the hands upon the dial-plate of the world's history. For the sake of a worthless literalism, they would deprive the Sabbath of all the sweet and blessed associations which have gathered around it as "the Lord's day." There is almost as much reason for going back to the sacrifices of the Jews. It is this spirit of devotion to the letter of Jewish law which Paul again and again condemns, and against which he urges Christians to assert their liberty. Second, it is made evident that there is no ground for the assertion which is so often made that the

change of day involved a complete abrogation of the Sabbath law or the fourth commandment. It is certainly a misapprehension of the Sabbath which leads men to say that to keep it at all involves keeping it on the seventh day. Though there is abundant authority in the actions and writings of the apostles for changing the day, they say not one word about the abrogation of the Sabbath. The institution, therefore, stands, for the law establishing it must be considered as having binding force until it is repealed. What they say about the moral law as the highest rule of human conduct would lead to this conclusion. In all the writings of the fathers there is nothing to indicate that they thought men had been released from the obligation to devote every seventh day to rest and religious purposes. To say, as many writers do, that Christians have virtually asserted the abrogation of the Sabbath by keeping the first instead of the seventh day of the week, and that "the Lord's day" is in no sense the Sabbath and rests upon an entirely different foundation, if it has any good foundation at all, is to make a statement that is not warranted by the facts. Good and able men have expressed this opinion, but they have strangely misunderstood the nature of the Sabbath, and strangely disregarded the necessary permanency of the law

by which it was established. Third, there is no reason whatever for those Christians who keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath to feel that they are without sufficient warrant for their practice. They sometimes wonder whether the custom to which they are conforming is not, to some extent, responsible for the growing indifference in this country to the claims of the Sabbath. No one should be disturbed by such questionings. There is nothing shadowy or uncertain about the foundation on which "the Lord's day" rests. We have the authority of inspired apostles to warrant us in its observance. We reject the seventh-day Sabbath on the same authority. If the conscience of any Christian troubles him on this account, it must be because he has been affected by the same Judaizing influences which Paul so much deprecated in his day. The change of day does not free us from the law of the Sabbath, neither have we transgressed that law by observing the Sabbath upon the first day of the week. Secure in following the example of the apostles, we may continue in the observance of "the Lord's day," feeling certain that the Sabbath itself will stand unshaken until we are ready to enter into the enjoyment of that eternal Sabbath which remains for the people of God.





## PART III.

### NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SABBATH.

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#### CHAPTER XI.

##### GROUND'S OF THE OBLIGATION TO KEEP THE LORD'S DAY.

One day thou wilt be blest ;  
So still obey the guiding hand that fends  
Thee safely through these wonders for such ends.—KEATS.

IN the previous chapters we have shown that the Sabbath is a divine institution, which God established for all men and which he designed to be of perpetual obligation. In maintaining this we have examined two lines of proof. The first was that which is derived from the consideration of the fact that the Sabbath is necessary to the welfare of man. This was held to make it *probable* that God would establish it at the beginning, and require its observance of all men in every age. The second was the direct evidence which appears in the Bible that God did sanctify the seventh day, and require men to keep it holy. We have found that, according to the record, the Sabbath was instituted at the creation ; that its

observance was commanded in the moral law given on Sinai, which law has never been repealed; that Christ, instead of abrogating the Sabbath, sanctioned it, and gave instructions concerning the proper method of observing it; and that, while the apostles changed the day on which it was kept, they said no word to indicate that the Sabbath was abolished. We are now prepared to examine the grounds on which the obligation to keep the Lord's day rests.

Why should men "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"? The all-sufficient answer is, Because God has commanded it, and he would not command an unreasonable or useless observance. We are content to rest the obligation upon the "holy, and just, and good" law of God. That law, which is the expression of the divine nature, and which perfectly conforms to the "course and constitution" of things, is the one safe and sure foundation on which to rest any observance. Obeying that law, it is impossible to go wrong. The law of the Sabbath is part of the universal law which men violate only at the expense of throwing themselves out of harmony with the universe and with God, and of being crushed by those forces which the Omnipotent marshals to destroy whatever puts itself in the way of his beneficent purposes.

True, all are not agreed that there is any requirement in this case. Maintaining that the law of the Sabbath is abolished, many writers assert that if we are to have any Sabbath, its observance should be secured, not by teaching men that it is commanded in the law of God, but by showing them that it is a privilege, or that it is expedient, or that it is for the good of society, or that the Church requires it, or that love for Christ will prompt it. It is necessary to examine these proposed foundations for the Lord's day, and to discover how far any one of them is likely to afford a secure and lasting basis for the institution.

Among those Christians who feel that the Church, or that particular branch of it to which they belong, has authority to create or abolish institutions of this kind, no further authority is needed for the Lord's day than that their "Church" requires its observance. The devout Romanist will yield instant and complete acquiescence to the decrees of his "Church." And there are others, not of that communion, who appeal to the same kind of authority in trying to enforce the duty of observing the Lord's day. Alford, in commenting on Romans 14:5, says, "I therefore infer that sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognized in apostolic times. It must be carefully remem-

bered that this inference does not concern the question of the observance of the Lord's day as an institution of the Christian Church, analogous to the ancient Sabbath, binding upon us from considerations of humanity and religious expediency, and by the rules of that branch of the Church in which Providence has placed us, but not in any way inheriting the divinely-appointed obligation of the other, or the strict prohibitions by which its sanctity was defended." \*

We have already shown that he is in error with regard to the repeal of the Sabbath law. The apostle is not, in this passage, arguing against the Sabbath, but against the enforcement upon the Gentiles of the requirement to observe it upon the seventh day of the week. Let us see whether Dean Alford's reasons for keeping the Lord's day are adequate. He calls it an "institution of the Christian Church," by which he means, undoubtedly, that it originated in the action of the Church subsequent to the time of the apostles. But we have seen that it had an apostolic and not simply an ecclesiastical origin. If it had only the latter, it had no basis of divine authority. He would have us keep it because it is "binding upon us" by the rules of that branch of the Church in which

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\* "Greek Testament," vol. ii. p. 452.

Providence has placed us. As Protestants we deny the right of the Church to make such rules. The Bible is our "only rule of faith and practice." A "Church" derives its right to control the conduct of its members from the inspired word, and cannot require anything beyond what it commands. But suppose we admit that a "Church" may legislate for its own members, its action in no wise affects those who do not belong to it. Are they at liberty to enact contradictory and conflicting laws? If one denomination of Christians may, on its own motion, require its members to keep the Lord's day holy, another denomination may certainly give its members liberty not to keep it, or may even require them not to. What would we say of a "Church" which should take such action? We could not resist the feeling that it had transcended its rights and violated the law of God. He says also that the Lord's day is "binding upon us from considerations of humanity and religious expediency." We do not deny it. Both of these are reasons why we should keep the Sabbath. It is an institution fraught with manifold blessings to the world, and he sins against his fellow men who does anything to impair it. It is especially needed by the poor, and common "humanity" would require us to give it to them. It is "expedient" to observe it,



for it is only by keeping it that men are enabled to meet for worship and religious instruction, and to perform other duties incumbent upon them. But only a very small portion of the race can be made to see these reasons. They require a "thus saith the Lord." A manufacturer might feel that his employes were just as well off without a Sabbath, and so an appeal to his "humanity" would be vain. Large numbers of men, probably a majority in any Christian land, would say that it was more "humane" to allow them to hunt or fish or ride or walk in the fields, or go on an excursion, than to ask them to attend church, and would regard it as more "expedient" for them to do it. The practical results of placing the observance of the Lord's day upon such grounds alone have always been disastrous. It is giving the average man a much larger measure of liberty than he is capable of wisely enjoying. It leaves so much discretionary with us that most men will follow their impulses rather than any lofty regulative principle.

The position taken by Alford is substantially the same as that taken by the reformers of the sixteenth century. They had felt the requirements of the Papal Church as intolerable bondage, and it was natural that, in the reaction, they should go to extremes. And so we hear Luther

saying, "Keep it holy for its use's sake both to body and soul; but if anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake—if anywhere any one sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation—then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty."\* Afterward he qualified this so as to make it only an exaggerated expression of his opinion that the observance of the Lord's day cannot be required by law.

In the "Larger Catechism," commenting on the fourth commandment, he says, "We celebrate festivals, not for the sake of intelligent and instructed Christians (for these have no need of them), but first, even for the sake of the body. Nature herself teaches the lesson that the working classes, servants and maids are to be considered; they have spent the whole week in laborious employment, and require a day on which they may take breath from their work, and refresh themselves, and restore their exhausted frames by repose. The second reason, and indeed the chief one, is this: that on such a day of rest, leisure and time may be obtained for divine worship (a duty for which, otherwise, no opportunity

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\* "Table Talk."

could be found), so that we may come together to hear and handle the word of God, and, further, that we may glorify God with hymns and psalms, with songs and prayers."

This is a fuller statement of what is meant by "humanity" and "religious expediency." But suppose every one should set himself up as an "intelligent and instructed Christian," and claim that he needed no Sabbath, what would become of the Lord's day, even as Luther would have it observed? Luther's view was shared, with some modifications, by his fellow reformers, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Peter Martyr and others.\* What has been the result? The practical destruction of the Sabbath. Every one familiar with the state of things on the continent of Europe knows that the Lord's day is very little regarded. The great mass of men are not moved by shadowy notions about "humanity" and "expediency." Comparatively few of those in Europe who have come under this influence use any part of the Lord's day even for church-going, and those who do, feel themselves at liberty to spend the remainder in amusements. As these peoples of Europe have been taught to believe that there is nothing holy about the day, they make it a hol-

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\* See Hessey, pp. 168-172.

iday, so far as it differs from other days. In many places business goes on as usual, and "humanity" constrains no one to have mercy on the working classes. This violation of the Sabbath is the direct result of wrong doctrine concerning it. This exaggerated notion of Christian liberty may have a certain attractiveness to those who cannot see the beauty of law; but it is very dangerous for the great mass of mankind. Teach men that they *need* not observe the Sabbath, and most of them *will* not. In England and America we have been taught to believe that to violate the Sabbath is a sin against God, a transgression of his law. The difference between the continental and the Anglo-American Sunday is sufficient proof that wrong doctrine of the Sabbath is at the foundation of its non-observance in the former case. Conduct is regulated by belief. Men may be worse than their opinions, but it is quite certain that they will never be better.

Dr. Philip Schaff, whose acquaintance with the facts will not be questioned, and whose judgment concerning the cause is entitled to the highest respect, says on this subject, "There has been no radical reform of the Sabbath on the continent of Europe since the Reformation, but rather a fearful progress of Sabbath-desecration in inseparable connection with a growing neglect of public

worship. This crying evil forms one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of vital religion among the people, and can never be successfully overcome except on the basis of a stricter theory than that which generally prevails in the greater part of the old world." \*

We hear much about the continental Sunday, and good men are troubled with sad forebodings lest it should be transplanted to American soil. There could be no surer way of bringing about this dreaded calamity than for Christian teachers generally to announce that we are under no other obligation to keep the Lord's day holy than that which grows out of "humanity" and "religious expediency." This is not sufficiently solid ground on which to build an institution which the greed and carnality of men will incite them to destroy.

Differing but little from this is the opinion or theory that the obligation to keep the Lord's day holy rests upon our love for Christ and for our fellow men. This view has been presented and strongly advocated by Dr. George B. Bacon. He says, "I hope to show in the particular case which I have taken in hand how our Lord's day has greater glory than the Jewish Sabbath. Only let us first complete and fortify the argument for'

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\* *Princeton Review*, vol. xxxv. p. 551.

its observance. For since the law written and engraven in stones, with all its glory, is done away, we have no right to rest the argument on the commandment. And, since the living Spirit of the Lord prompts the observance, we have no need to rest the argument on the commandment, but appeal directly to the liberty of love. Does the love of Christ constrain us to it? Does the love of God, the love of man, the love of our own souls, impel us to the voluntary commemoration of this first day of the week? Or does this love find fit and useful expression in such a commemoration?"\* All these questions he answers in the affirmative, and his answers are true. No one can doubt that these are the noblest motives by which men can be actuated to keep the Lord's day. Every one who is capable of feeling them must acknowledge that one who is moved by them can keep it with far greater joy and profit than are possible to him who regards it as a burden, and keeps it only because he feels that he ought. At the same time, this theory is weak just where the one previously noticed is weak. These motives are not felt by any except the most advanced Christians with sufficient strength to impel them to observe the Sabbath at all. It

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\* "Sabbath Question," pp. 209, 210.



makes us blush for our common humanity to acknowledge it, but it is nevertheless true. This is, no doubt, the ideal of Christian liberty that men should do right because they love to ; but if you say to men in general, do as you please, they will please to do wrong. Paul found that the Christians of his time were ready enough to abuse the liberty which he proclaimed as their right in Christ, and even claimed the liberty to indulge in gross sin. The history of the Church shows that whenever liberty has been asserted to the exclusion of law, license has been the immediate result. The plain teaching of Scripture is that men can never rise above the law as a rule of conduct, and that so long as they do not obey it spontaneously and gladly, they are to obey it from a sense of obligation. This was clearly shown in another part of the discussion. Happy is the man who can rise superior to the law because "the love of Christ constraineth" him gladly to obey it ; but until we are perfect we must acknowledge the law's restraints. If love to Christ and to your fellow men and to your own soul impels you to observe the Lord's day, you may forget the fourth commandment ; but if it does not, you are yet under the law. The law has never been repealed ; it is still binding upon every one of us. Christ has not changed it. He has only

changed some of *us* so that we can obey it with joy. Hence we insist that the attempt to make love the sole foundation of the obligation to observe the Lord's day is unsafe, because it will be understood by those in whom this motive is not sufficiently strong that they need not keep it at all. It may be said that they *ought* to love Christ, and that this is the first obligation to put before them. We grant it; but we must not tell them that they are at liberty to lie or steal until they do love him. We thus come back to the fundamental principle that law must be enforced—that the conscience must be appealed to—until liberty is safe because the heart is right. Another difficulty with this view, as with the preceding, is that it leaves too much discretionary with the individual. On this theory it is submitted to his judgment whether he will keep the Sabbath or disregard it. He is also at liberty to choose in what manner he will observe it. Now God has not left men with this degree of license. He knows too well how certainly men go astray when allowed to choose their own course. We are so full of sin, our desires are so corrupt, our hearts are so selfish, that we need an infallible guide in all matters of conduct. As well leave a man delirious with fever to choose his own medicine, as to leave a man to take his own course in

a matter so vitally related to his eternal welfare as the observance of the Lord's day.

And this leads us to notice a third foundation which has been laid for the obligation to keep the Sabbath. It is maintained that the Jewish Sabbath has been wholly abrogated, and that the Lord's day is an entirely new institution, resting upon the basis of apostolic example. This is the position taken by Dr. Hessey, though he admits that there is an *analogy* between the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's day. He says, "The Lord's day is not a continuance, in the strict sense of that word, of the Sabbath, but rests upon a foundation of its own." \* This he has previously explained to be the example of the apostles. Thus, "the Lord's day (a festival on the first day in each week in memory of our Lord's resurrection) is of divine institution, and peculiarly Christian in its character, as being indicated in the New Testament, and having been acknowledged by the apostles and their immediate followers as distinct from the Sabbath (a Jewish festival on the seventh day in each week), the obligation to observe which is denied, both expressly and by implication, in the New Testament." † With this we have little fault to find.

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\* "Sunday," p. 136.

† *Ibid.*, p. 14.

There can be no question that we have apostolic authority for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. But we deny that the Lord's day is wholly independent of the Jewish Sabbath. It is the same institution modified to suit the needs of the Christian Church; otherwise we are wholly in the dark as to the proper method of observing it. If you say that we may learn this from the fourth commandment as interpreted by Christ and the apostles, you admit all that we claim, namely, that the Sabbath has been transferred to the first day of the week. But where else shall we go to learn it? We have simply the two facts that the apostles and early Christians were accustomed to hold religious meetings on the first day of the week, and that they declared the seventh-day Sabbath to be abolished. They do not tell us, however, that the Sabbath as an institution is done away, neither do they give any instruction about how to keep the Lord's day. If they had been founding an entirely new institution, which had no direct relation to anything in the past, would they not have been likely to have given some hint, at least, as to the proper method of observing it? If it be said, in reply, that this was their usual method—that they left the form of organization and the ordinances of the Church

to be shaped by the inworking Spirit and subsequent events—we answer that, in our opinion, these matters were very definitely determined by their commands and example, and that we should expect the same thing with regard to the observance of the Lord's day if it were an entirely new institution. We do not deny that we are bound, in matters of Christian observance, by the example of the apostles; but we have something far more plain and explicit concerning the Sabbath in the fourth commandment, which they did not repeal and which is still binding upon us. Men need this explicitness. The average mind is more readily moved by a direct command than by an inference drawn from the example of even inspired men. They may dispute the inference, but they cannot dispute the command. We desire to know and teach the truth. Men may be temporarily injured by knowing the full measure of their liberty; but, in the long run, they had better know the whole truth. We would not pretend that the fourth commandment is still in force simply because we feared to declare the contrary. That is not our argument. We have already shown that there is no evidence in the Scriptures of its abrogation. What we here claim is that this conclusion is borne out by the fact that no other ground of obligation to keep the Sabbath is

adequate. On no other basis will it commend itself to the judgment and consciences of the great mass of mankind. We do not fear liberty when its enjoyment is in accordance with the divine plan; but we have no evidence that it is God's plan to annul the original law of the Sabbath and leave us to find wholly new reasons for keeping it.

It should not be inferred from anything that has been said that Dean Alford, Dr. Bacon or Dr. Hessey wrote in antagonism to the Sabbath. Nothing in their writings shows any but the strongest desire that this blessed institution should be sacredly preserved. Their desire to promote its proper observance led them to study and think and write upon it. They tried honestly to find the best ground on which to base such an observance. It is because we think they erred, in departing from the plain letter of the law and seeking something else for a basis of the Lord's day, that we have criticised their presentation of the subject. The reasons for observing the Lord's day which they have advanced *ought* to be sufficient to lead all men to observe it. We do not reject these reasons; we only say that the first and strongest and best reason is in the law of God. But we must notice in this connection one theory put forth by Christian men, which, if



adopted, would be totally destructive of the Sabbath and of everything closely connected with it — of true religion itself. This is the view that to the true Christian all days are alike holy; that, since he is to do all things to the glory of God, he must consecrate all his time to God's service; that to set apart one day as sacred is to belittle and secularize the others, and that he does not need any such day, since he carries the spirit of perfect consecration into all that he does. This, it is claimed, is what Paul meant when he said that one day is as good as another. It argues a low state of religion when men need special days and seasons. If they were only far enough advanced in the divine life, they would need nothing of the kind. F. W. Robertson seems to favor this theory, for he says, speaking of Paul's doctrine of holy days, "The gospel of Christ had sanctified all time; hence no time could be specially God's. For to assert that Sunday is more God's day than Monday is to maintain by implication that Monday is his less rightfully."\* He maintains the need of the Sabbath, but holds that it is a need growing out of our imperfections as Christians. He says of Paul, "His heart would have sunk within him could he

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\* Sermons, second series, p. 203.

have been told that at the end of eighteen centuries the Christian Church would still be observing days and months and times and years—and, still more, needing them.”\*

This implies that a time may come when there will be no need of Sabbath. On its surface this theory has a very attractive look ; but a careful examination shows that it is utterly fallacious. It is a half-truth, and on that account the worst of falsehoods. It is true that Monday is just as much God's day as Sunday, but it is his, by his own command, for a different purpose. If all our time belongs to God, that is a sufficient reason why we should use it as he directs. Now, he has told us to labor six days, and to use the seventh for rest and religious exercises. “To obey is better than sacrifice.” To have an obedient spirit and to act in accordance with God's will is a better means of sanctifying all our time than some fancied notion that, since it all belongs to God, it is all to be used in one way. Whatever we do in obedience to God's will—the meanest toil that ever occupied the hands of a common laborer—is thus rendered holy. It is the spirit in which one uses his days which determines whether or not they are sacred. Moreover, this theory, if carried out in practice,

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\* Sermons, second series, p. 205.

would result in the secularization of all days and the sanctifying of none. When will men be so holy that they will not be obliged to toil for their daily bread, to work on farms, in shops, in stores, in factories, in offices, wherever a livelihood may be gained? This work will always take their attention, occupy their thoughts and exhaust their strength; hence they will always need days when they can rest, and give their attention to other matters. The Sabbath *has* a foundation in the needs of men, but those needs will continue as long as time lasts. They are not imperfections, they are constitutional needs. It would work disaster to the spiritual life of the best Christian if he were to attempt to do the same things on Sunday that he does on other days with the idea that he could make them all religious. We shall always need the quiet and meditation, and private and public worship, of the Lord's day in order that on other days we may maintain a spirit of consecration. Instead of importing the occupations of the week into the Sabbath day, we must import the spirit of the Lord's day into the other days of the week.

The defects of this view have been so well exposed in the strong and beautiful words of Hengstenberg that a somewhat extended quotation from him will be pardoned. He says, "The

notion that this want (*i. e.*, the want of fixed and periodical occasions on which all outward hindrances to the service of God are removed) only existed under the Old Testament—that, because (in one sense) every day is a Sabbath to the Christian, the setting apart of certain days is only desirable for those who are merely outwardly members of the New Testament, but inwardly belong to the Old—will certainly find no advocate in the truly advanced Christian, but only in those who have been so absorbed in their *imaginary* self as to lose sight of what they *really* are. The false spiritualism from which such assertions spring is a worm which gnaws more destructively at our spiritual life than legality ever can. That which is true in theory is not always true without restrictions when put into practice by individuals; and this is more than ever the case in our day, whose impurities are so great, whose faith is so feeble, and whose seeking for holiness is so destitute of earnestness. If we were members of Christ and nothing else, we should no longer require to set apart certain times, for our whole lives would be an uninterrupted worship. But the flesh still exists in us as well as the spirit, and its strength is always so much the greater in proportion to our unconsciousness of its existence: and, therefore, the louder and more

confident a man's assertions that fixed times for assembling are superfluous, and the more he despises those who think them necessary, as though they could not tell the signs of the times, the stronger the proof that *he* needs them still. For flying, something more is required than simply to fancy that we have wings. He who is conscious that he has none, and pursues his pilgrimage humbly leaning upon his staff, will have made the greatest progress in the end. The continuance of sin in us always brings with it susceptibility to external impressions and to the influence of evil around us, together with wanderings of mind. The spark may fall on iron without danger, but not upon the tinder. For this reason, in order that we may pray without ceasing in a manner befitting our station, 'we must sometimes enter into our chamber and shut the door behind us;' and in order to keep every day as a day to the Lord, we must keep one day free from everything that can disturb our devotion. Such disturbance arises most from our earthly employments." \*

Thus we come back to the position that, primarily, the ground of obligation on which the observance of the Lord's day rests is the law of

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\* Quoted by Hessey, "Sunday," pp. 144, 145

God. It was commanded in the moral law, and that law has never been repealed. It had an earlier origin than the proclamation of the ten commandments on Sinai; but, even if this were disproved, it would still be binding upon all men, for those commandments are expressions of the divine will, and are universal rules of human conduct. This, then, is the primary reason for remembering "the sabbath day, to keep it holy." It is a duty which the law of Jehovah imposes upon us. He has given the institution special sanctions by making it commemorative of the finished work of creation, and of the finished work of redemption wrought out for us by his Son. "The Sabbath, then, rests upon a threefold basis—the original *creation*, the Jewish *legislation* and the Christian *redemption*."\* His law has made it the monumental sign of his works.

Yet the laws of God are never arbitrary. He never lays any commands upon men, obedience to which will not promote their highest interests. They may feel that his commands restrict their liberty, but the only true liberty is that which renders glad obedience to law. And when men obey God, they come to see, after a while, that benevolence was at the foundation of his law-

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\* Schaff: *Princeton Review*, vol. xxxv. p. 539.



making. He does not command a thing in order to make it right, but because it is right. If he puts restraints upon us, it is that they may hold us as the anchor holds the ship and keeps it from being driven upon the rocks. If he compels us to go in paths that seem to be rough and thorny, and to lead in a direction exactly the contrary of that which we would take, it is only that we may be brought home at last.

In perfect keeping with this method of treating us, we have found that the Sabbath is necessary to the physical, mental, moral, religious and social welfare of man. God gave it, not for his own sake, but for our sake. To poor, toiling, suffering, sinful humanity it comes laden with the choicest blessings. Hence, love for our fellow men suggests an additional reason why we should "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." We shall be enemies of our race if we do not. It is also good for all of us as members of the race. The body, mind and soul of every man need it. Hence, self-love—love for our noblest and highest selves—will prompt us to obey the law of the Sabbath. These are parts of the foundation of which the law of God is the chief corner-stone. For obedience to the law of God is always and everywhere the best means of promoting the welfare of our fellow men, and the one

sure way of serving our own highest interests. Considerations of the advantages of the Sabbath help us to obey the law requiring us to observe it, for they show us how reasonable it is, and make us feel that in keeping it we are receiving a blessing for ourselves, instead of bearing a burden, and that in keeping it for the sake of others we are co-workers with God, instead of slaves of an arbitrary power.

It is objected that this is mere legalism, a return to that from which Christ has made us free, and that a better way to build up character—the only purpose in the kingdom of Christ—is to appeal to love as a constraining motive. We answer, as we have answered before in substance, that *legalism* is a spirit, and not an action or a series of actions. The moral law can never be done away or changed. Jesus said, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.”\* Christ himself obeyed the law. When John objected to baptizing him, he said, “thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”† He said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”‡ “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”§ He “became obedient unto death,

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\* Luke 16 : 17.

† John 4 : 34.

‡ Matthew 3 : 15.

§ *Ibid.* 5 : 30.

even the death of the cross.”\* Was he, therefore, a legalist, a mere slave of the law? Was he less manly, heroic, self-denying, benevolent, divine, because he made it his chief purpose in life to obey the law of the Father? When the matter is put in this light, it is seen at once to be sheer nonsense to say that there is any higher or nobler reason for doing a thing than because it is in the law of God, which is loved and gladly obeyed by every one whose heart is right in his sight. As though to put a ban upon all sentimentalism of this sort, Christ said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”† “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”‡ Love may be the impelling motive, but after all the great thing is to keep the commandments. Let no one hope that he can find higher ground on which to base the Sabbath than that it is among the things commanded. We shall rejoice when we are enabled to see that among all peoples the law of the Sabbath is written, “not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart;” § but it will still be a law, and obedience to it will still be a necessity.

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\* Philippians 2 : 8.

† John 14 : 15.

‡ Matthew 7 : 21.

§ 2 Corinthians 3 : 3.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE JEWISH SABBATH.

And call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable.—ISAIAH 58 : 13.

HOWEVER clear it may be that the Sabbath is a divine institution designed for all men, that its observance is of perpetual obligation, and that it rests upon the secure foundation of the eternal and immutable law of God, our work would not be complete should we fail to present in full the teaching of God's word upon the nature, importance and proper observance of the Sabbath. If men are told that they are under obligation to keep it holy, they will ask what the Sabbath is. An exposition of the nature of the obligation is essential to its enforcement. While it is undoubtedly true that each man must be left to his own individual conscience as to the precise method of keeping the day, a general statement of the Lord's design in sanctifying it, as that design appears in the Bible history of the institution, is justly demanded by every one who is required to observe it. Furthermore, a fair exposition of the nature of the true Sabbath will

furnish us with additional reasons for believing that the obligation to observe it is universal and perpetual. Nothing is better calculated to convince one of its necessity and reasonableness than a careful study of what is taught in Scripture concerning its purpose and character. False doctrine as to what the Sabbath was designed to be has been a potent cause of its desecration. If the law defining it is made too strict, as in the case of the Pharisees and of the Puritans, men revolt against it as unnatural and injurious; if it is made too lax, as in the case of the Papists, its sanctity is wholly destroyed. A clear exposition of what the inspired writers mean by a Sabbath is, therefore, essential to the enforcement of the obligation. We hope that the discussion of the Jewish Sabbath, and of that Sabbath as modified by the gospel, which we propose to undertake in this and the following chapter, will remove any remaining doubt in the mind of the reader respecting the command to observe it as both reasonable in its nature and benevolent in its purpose. Let us first give our attention to the Jewish Sabbath.

As we "search the Scriptures" of the Old Testament for light on this subject, we are strongly impressed with the vast *importance* which they give to this institution. It is

spoken of with all possible emphasis by legislators and prophets. The necessity of observing it is made very prominent in the minds of the people. "It was re-enacted in the fourth commandment, which gave it a rank above that of an ordinary law, making it one of the signs of the covenant. As such it remained, together with the passover, the two forming the most solemn and distinctive features of the Hebrew religious life. Its neglect or profanation ranked foremost among national sins; the renewed observance of it was sure to accompany national reformation."\* This importance is indicated in a variety of ways: (1) By the awful manifestation of the divine power and glory which accompanied the promulgation of the law on Sinai. These were designed to impress the people with the importance of the moral law. They could but feel that a law the giving of which was accompanied by these miraculous displays was invested with a peculiar sanctity. It is true that this affected the ten commandments as a whole; but the command to keep the Sabbath had so prominent a place among them that it would naturally come in for a large share of the

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\* Francis Gardner: *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, p. 2758, article "Sabbath."



consideration due to them all. With a single exception it is the longest of the commandments. It is more minute in its directions than any other. It was inevitable that as the Hebrews thought of that summary of God's law which he had given in circumstances of so great solemnity, they would attach peculiar importance to the fourth commandment.

(2) By the form in which the command to observe it was given. We have already noticed its minuteness and length as bringing it into contrast with the others. It was also distinguished from the rest by being *affirmative* in its form; all the others are negative. They are simple prohibitions; this requires positive duties. Of course, something more than mere abstinence from evil is implied in the others, but they are negative in form. Both the precepts of the fourth commandment require the doing of something: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." At once this starts the question *why* is this required and *how* is it to be done; and thus men are set to thinking of their religious interests. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." Here the duty of industry is enjoined in the positive form. That they may know how to appreciate the day of rest, they must work on the other six days. A command

so directly and positively regulative of the whole life could not fail to impress them with its importance.

(3) By the events with which the command was associated. The first and greatest of these was the creation of the world and the rest of God which followed it. The origin of the world has always had a profound interest for thoughtful men. An institution which was a perpetual memorial of the fact that the God of their fathers created it would naturally have a large place in the minds of the Hebrew people. And then, that rest of God, that mysterious cessation from work while the divine energy was as active as ever,—what significance would they attach to that! They could not understand it; no man has quite understood it; but its very mystery would impress them with a sense of awe. That the life of man should in some way be patterned after the life of God in the creation would give them a sense of nearness to him. More than any other one thing it would make them feel that they were *his* people.

The other event of importance to the Hebrew mind, with which the Sabbath was associated, was their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. This was the greatest event in their national history. From a throng of oppressed and degraded

slaves it made them into a free nation, inspired with the hope that their glory should fill the whole earth. It had nearly the same place in their minds that the Declaration of Independence and the struggle to maintain it have in the minds of the American people. The main difference was that it was more their habit than it is ours to refer their deliverance directly to the power of God exercised in their behalf. God commanded them to keep the Sabbath holy on account of what he had done for them: "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."\* The Sabbath thus became to the Hebrew people a sort of sanctified Fourth of July. As a memorial of their deliverance, it was a distinctively Jewish institution; as a memorial of creation—and it is in this relation that it appears in the moral law—it is universal, having a claim upon the attention of all men.

(4) By the number of times the command to keep the Sabbath holy is repeated. In the law given by Moses it occurs not less than eight

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\* Deuteronomy 5:15.

times. No other command except the first—that prohibiting idolatry—is thus emphasized. Moses seemed to act on the idea that with regard to the Sabbath “precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line.”\* Some of these repetitions were very formal and solemn. One of them reads, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep; for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh *is* the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant. It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for *in* six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the

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\* Isaiah 28 : 10.

seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”\* It was not because this command was more likely to be forgotten than the others that it was so often repeated; it was because the institution was so important and had such a vital relation to the religion of the Hebrews and to their welfare as a nation.

(5) By the penalty attached to the violation of the Sabbath. In the passage just quoted the penalty of “defiling” it was stated to be death. In another place it is said, “whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.”† In spite of these explicit prohibitions, the people and even the elders did not seem clearly to understand what kind of work would “defile” it. But it was not long before an event occurred which made the matter perfectly plain. It is narrated in the following words: “And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall

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\* Exodus 31:12-17.

† *Ibid.*, 35:2.

stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses.”\* This strikes us as a terrible penalty for such an offence. We are shocked at the apparent disproportion between the punishment and the sin. If the Sabbath was a blessing and a privilege, why not let the man who deprived himself of it simply suffer the natural consequences? But when we look a little more carefully into the nature of the case, the punishment does not seem so harsh or severe. God was educating his people, and through them the world. Here was an institution which was not only vitally related to their welfare, but which would bear an important part in the glorious work of redeeming the whole race. The law establishing it had just been re-enacted with a degree of solemnity calculated to make them all feel that it must be obeyed. To gather a few sticks upon a holy day was in itself a small matter; but to perform an act which, if allowed to pass unpunished, would tend to destroy an institution like the Sabbath, was quite another thing. If a company of soldiers were storming a fortress, and if, just at the critical moment, the com-

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\* Numbers 15 : 32-36.



manding officer should see that one of the men was about to perform an act of disobedience that would throw the whole line into confusion, and about which there could be no mistake, would he not be justifiable in shooting the insubordinate or cowardly man on the spot? In so doing he might save the lives of many others and win for his country an important victory. Well, the case was somewhat like this in the early history of the Sabbath. They were at the critical point of determining whether God should have a people in the world. Far more than we may think, the result depended upon the observance of the Sabbath. The institution could not be destroyed without defeating God's purposes and robbing the world of countless and immeasurable blessings. It was necessary, therefore, that an open infraction of the law should be severely punished. In no other way could the transcendent importance of the institution be impressed upon the minds of the chosen people. No injustice was done to the transgressor, for he had been fairly warned; but he might have obtained mercy had it not been for the necessity of impressing the people with the importance of the Sabbath. His act was calculated to destroy that which God, in his infinite wisdom, had determined to maintain. How could he maintain it if, at the very outset,

one who had violated its sanctity was allowed to go unpunished?

(6) By the prominence which is given to it, in the reproof and instruction of the reformers and prophets of Israel. We have already noticed this in showing that the fourth commandment is a part of the moral law; but we may consider it from another point of view. In spite of the solemn emphasis placed upon this command, it was not always obeyed. Just in the proportion that the worship of Jehovah declined and idolatry took its place, the Sabbath was desecrated. In the two or three troubled centuries that followed the reign of Solomon and the dismemberment of the empire, the Sabbath was little regarded. In the time of Amos the people, greedy of gain, came to look upon its observance as a burden. They are represented by that prophet as saying, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?"\* Isaiah frequently denounces their formal and heartless observance of the Sabbath, or their entire disregard of it. The Lord spoke through him saying, "Bring no more vain obla-

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\* Amos 8 : 5.

tions; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*"\* Read again the glorious promises† which are made through him to those who keep the Sabbath, and learn how important it was in the mind of this greatest of the prophets. In the time of Jeremiah it had become customary to transport merchandise on the Sabbath, and for this it is threatened that the judgments of God shall fall upon Israel.‡ These prophecies were speedily fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity of seventy years. It was distinctly understood that this terrible calamity was brought upon them by their sins, among which the violation of the Sabbath was prominent. Ezekiel, who lived in the time of the captivity, explains not only past§ but also present judgments by referring to this profanation. The Lord says through him, "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed *difference* between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned

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\* Isaiah 1:13.

† Jeremiah 17:19-25.

‡ *Ibid.*, 56:1-7; 58:13, 14.

§ Ezekiel 20:12-24.

among them. . . . Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.”\* With the conviction strong in their minds that this was the origin of their humiliation and sufferings, it was natural that, on their return from the captivity, they should take all possible pains to observe the Sabbath and to secure its observance on the part of the people. The warning and denunciation of the prophets had not been in vain. When Nehemiah became governor of Judea, he found that the Jews who had remained at home had been corrupted by their heathen neighbors, and that trading on the Sabbath was a common practice. This abuse he determined to reform. “In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner* of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah,

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\* Ezekiel 22 : 26, 31.

and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day."\* Previously, in the preaching of the Levites, which was a part of the great reformatory and reconstructive movement under Nehemiah, the Sabbath had been

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\* Nehemiah 13 : 15-22.

spoken of almost as though the keeping of it was the first religious duty.\* From his time we hear no more of violations of it by the Hebrews. The preaching of the prophets and the actions of Nehemiah gave the Sabbath such prominence in their minds that thereafter the tendency was in the direction of a too strict observance of it. They did not make it too important, but they misinterpreted much of what had been said on the subject, and the consequence was that the Sabbath came to be loaded with abuses. But they never again despised it. They were cured once for all of that sin.

In these ways the importance of the Sabbath was impressed upon the minds of the Hebrews. The "holy men of old" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" gave the people they taught, to understand that the law of the Sabbath must not be trifled with—that here was an institution which must be sustained. The dignity and worth which it thus acquired in their estimation was not of human origin, but had a divine source. If we can ascertain *why* it was made so important, it will help us to decide whether or not it has claims upon us which we are bound to regard.

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\* Nehemiah 9 : 14.



As a day of *rest* the Sabbath was a great privilege to the Hebrews. They had been slaves in Egypt, and had known what it was to suffer from the degrading influence of unremitting toil. They had felt the sting of the taskmaster's lash, and had labored hard without reaping the profits of their labor. "The seventh day *is* the sabbath of the Lord thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt."\* They had enjoyed no rest-days in Egypt, and by the institution of the Sabbath they were constantly reminded of the difference between their condition before God stretched out his arm to save them and their present condition. Looking at the matter in this light, they could hardly fail to regard the liberty to stop work and rest one day in seven as a blessed privilege. In this way God impressed upon them the beneficence of the Sabbath.

This day of rest had also a typical significance. It looked forward as well as backward. It not only reminded them of their former slavery and

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\* Deuteronomy 5 : 14, 15.

their present liberty, but also prophesied of a rest higher, nobler and more perfect than it brought. While they were in the wilderness, it foreshadowed the rest from wandering and danger which they would enjoy in the promised land. It stood always as a symbol of the rest of the soul in God, which could be perfected only as they passed one by one into that "better country," the "heavenly," into which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had gone. It spoke of a time when they, as a people, would have rest from the endless round of sacrifices and offerings, from wearying and fruitless efforts to obey the law, from doleful experiences of transgression and consequent judgments; of a time when they should have peace through "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and when, in "the glorious liberty of the children of God," they would obey gladly the law written "in fleshly tables of the heart." The rest of the Sabbath and the rest of the promised land were not perfect; "For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest"—a sabbatizing—"to the people of God."\* It spoke also

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\* Hebrews 4 : 8, 9.

of the perfect rest beyond the grave, when all their toils and struggles and difficulties would be over, and when they would know in its fullness the peace of God. It is not probable that many of them attached this meaning to the weekly day of rest. They were children in the faith, and saw but dimly the great spiritual verities which the forms and ceremonies of their religion symbolized. But some of them "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."\* The Sabbath was designed to teach them the blessed truth that the faithful should not finally fail of entering into perfect rest. Thus, as a day of rest it was both a privilege and a promise of better things to come.

The Sabbath was very important in its relation to the *religious life* of the Hebrews. They were the chosen people of God, and as such were to keep alive his worship. They were exposed on every hand to the influence of heathenism. In keeping the Sabbath of the Lord they were distinguished from the heathen around them; and just in the proportion that it was desecrated

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\* Hebrews 11: 13.

did idolatry make inroads upon the worship of Jehovah. This connection was inevitable, as will be seen from a study of the nature of the antagonism between the Hebrew religion and the religions of their heathen neighbors. Many of the latter worshipped Baal and Astarte, the god and goddess who were supposed to give the increase of the flocks and fruits of the earth. Being the impersonation of those forces of nature which are operative for the support of man—having, as was supposed, power to produce a famine or to give plenty—they were naturally the most important of the heathen deities. But the Hebrews were constantly reminded by the Sabbath that “God created the heaven and the earth,” and that he reigned with sovereign power over all its forces. The heathen were accustomed to look to their divinities for protection from danger and for victory over their enemies. The Sabbath was a standing memorial to the Hebrews of how Jehovah had wrought mightily in delivering them from Egypt—of how he had brought them “out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm.” So long as they kept it holy, it was an assurance that the same power was always ready to be exercised in their behalf.

Again, the prosperity of the Hebrew people was conditional upon their obedience to the law

of God. In keeping that law they would be blessed. If they despised and disobeyed it, calamity would surely fall upon them. Such was the announcement of Jehovah. But how were they to know the law from generation to generation? There were no printed books in those early days, and only a few copies of the books of Moses would be in existence at any one time. The people generally could not become acquainted with it by reading. They were wholly dependent upon oral instruction. When would there be time for it? When could they congregate for the purpose? Manifestly the natural and proper time for it was the weekly Sabbath. Thus we read, "Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation."\* There can be little doubt that this "convocation" was not only for worship but also for instruction in the law. Two passages in Josephus throw light on this question. He says, "The seventh day we set apart from labor; it is dedicated to the learning of our customs and laws: we think it proper to reflect on them as well as on any good thing else, in order to our avoiding sin."† In another place, speaking of the superior excellence of

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\* Leviticus 23 : 3.

† "Antiquities," b. xvi. ch. 2, sec. 3.

Moses as a law-giver over the law-givers of other nations, he says that "Moses demonstrated the law to be the best and the most necessary instruction of all others, permitting the people to leave off their other employments, and to assemble together for the hearing of the law and learning it exactly; and this not once or twice, or oftener, but every week; which thing all the other legislators seem to have neglected."\* Thus provision was made for that instruction in the law which was necessary if it was to be obeyed and if the blessings promised to obedience were to be secured. In this relation the Sabbath was essential to the maintenance of true religion and of national existence.

But it was not used alone for instruction; it was also the regular day of worship. The morning and evening sacrifices were doubled on that day.† On that day the shewbread in the holy place was to be changed. There can be no doubt that the "holy convocation" of the Sabbath was held as much for worship as for instruction. The question put by the husband of the Shunammite woman to his wife, concerning her proposed visit to Elisha—"Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor

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\* "Against Apion," b. ii. sec. 18.

† Numbers 28 : 9.



sabbath"\*—indicates that it was the custom of the people to assemble on that day with the prophets and other religious teachers. Singing praises to God must have constituted a part of the worship, for the ninety-second psalm is marked "A Psalm for the sabbath day." This does not imply that no other psalm was used on that day, but that this was peculiarly appropriate for it. A frequently-recurring day on which they could gather for worship was very necessary to their religious development. They were to be distinguished as the worshippers of Jehovah. Christ said it had been written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."† This was a summary of many of the commands of the Mosaic law. Man must worship something. The instinct is strong within him to stand in awe of the Supreme and do reverence to his name. This tendency to worship is the unconscious testimony of the soul to its divine origin. It is this which places man above all other earthly creatures ;

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?" ‡

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\* 2 Kings 4 : 23.

‡ Tennyson : "Morte d'Arthur."

† Matthew 4 : 10.

It is certain that frequent days of worship would be divinely appointed for a people through whom the religious education of the world was to be largely accomplished. It is scarcely conceivable that fullest provision would not be made for the development of the spirit of reverence and adoration, since this underlies all religion and all religious possibilities. How highly developed this spirit of devotion was among the Hebrews is shown by the Psalms—those marvellous hymns which voice the religious needs and aspirations of the human soul as no other productions have done, and which sing the praises of God in strains so lofty and powerful that the world will never outgrow them.

It is clear that the Sabbath was made important in the minds of the Hebrews for good and sufficient reasons. It was so great a blessing to them as a day of rest, it taught so many great truths, and it was so vitally connected with their religious system, that we should expect all the means to be employed by which its careful observance could be secured. Those means were the solemn circumstances in which the command to keep it holy was uttered, the extended and particularizing form in which the command was given, the greatness of the events with which the Sabbath was associated, the fre-

quency with which the command was repeated, the death penalty attached to its violation, and the prominence given to it in the warnings and promises addressed to the Hebrew people.

This discussion of its importance in the Hebrew polity throws light on the nature of the Sabbath as observed by them. The day was not one of idleness. It did not require the suspension of all activity, as the rabbis afterward taught. The original terms of the command to keep it holy show that the kinds of work forbidden were *servile* work and secular *business*. Nothing of a worldly or purely selfish nature was permitted. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken *it*." \* Words could not set forth more clearly the fact that the day was the Lord's, and was not to be used for the earthly

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\* Isaiah 58 : 13, 14.

pleasure or profit of man. Notice how they were not to find their own pleasure, and yet to call the Sabbath a delight; "pleasure" here meaning the gratification of carnal and worldly desires. There are not many specific prohibitions. They were forbidden to have fires in their houses on the Sabbath;\* but as fires, in that climate, were used almost exclusively for cooking, this prohibition was plainly designed to secure rest for the women and domestic servants. In one case they were forbidden to go without the camp;† but this was in connection with gathering manna, and was not, probably, meant to be a permanent regulation. With these exceptions the prohibitions were simply general, and included *work*, *business* and *carnal pleasure*. But abstinence from labor did not mean inaction. Whatever work was necessary to the conduct of worship and to the offering of sacrifices was allowable.‡ The mind was to be diligently employed in studying the law of God, and the heart was to be alive in his worship. It was not a day of restraint and gloom. Though it was a holy day, it was full of joy and gladness. The true Hebrew never thought it necessary to

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\* Exodus 35 : 3.

† Matthew 12 : 5.

‡ *Ibid.*, 16 : 29

be gloomy in order to be religious. With him song and dance and feast could all be consecrated to the service of the Holy One. They were taught to "be glad in the Lord." A remarkable illustration of this is found in the book of Nehemiah. When the people were taught out of the law and shown their sins, they were filled with sorrow. Then Nehemiah and Ezra and the Levites "said unto all the people, This day *is* holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this* day *is* holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."\* There is no evidence that this was on the Sabbath day; on the contrary, it is quite clear that it was not. The feast they were directed to hold was evidently the "feast of

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\* Nehemiah 8 : 9-12.

trumpets,"\* which occurred on the first day of the seventh month, and which was a specially joyful occasion. Still the day is three times declared to be "holy unto the Lord"; and we quote the passage to show that the Hebrews did not regard the rejoicing as inconsistent with the proper observance of the day. It may be said that their religion was fairly expressed in the words "The joy of the Lord is your strength." This has led to a misapprehension of their practice in keeping the Sabbath. Our tendency to eliminate rejoicing from our religious exercises, and to feel that whatever is mirthful must be irreligious, makes it hard to understand how David could dance "before the Lord,"† how we can properly be exhorted to "praise his name in the dance,"‡ and these people could "make great mirth" on a day "holy unto the Lord." The explanation is simple. They were accustomed to give expression in bodily signs to their religious joy; hence a thing was not irreligious because it was mirthful. Their Sabbath was never a holiday in our sense of the term. They did nothing on it inconsistent with a strictly religious observance. They never devoted it

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\* Leviticus 23 : 24, 25.

† Psalm 149 : 3.

‡ 2 Samuel 6 : 14.



to mere amusement. That such a thing would have been considered a sin is plain from the passage just quoted from Isaiah. If they visited on that day, it was in order that they might gather with friends for religious conversation. If they made "feasts," they were like the *agapæ* or love feasts of the early Christians, and were made primarily for the purpose of giving "portions unto them for whom nothing" was "prepared." They were never the kind of entertainment which we understand by the word feast. That is plain from the prohibition of fires in the houses, and from the strict injunction to give their servants rest. With their views of the nature of religion, it was possible to make the day joyful without secularizing it.

It follows that they never felt the day to be a burden, except when all religious duties were burdensome to them. When they forgot God, when they fell into idolatry, when they became greedy of gain and were not willing to lose their profits or the labor of servants one day in seven, when carnal pleasure was better to them than the joys of religion,—when, in a word, they walked in the ways of their own depraved hearts,—then the keeping of the Sabbath was felt to be intolerable bondage. It was never *meant* to be a burden. Received in the right

spirit and rightly observed, it was a blessing and a privilege. It was only after its perversion, after the rabbis had smothered the true Sabbath under a great heap of abuses, that it became a burden, "heavy and grievous to be borne." Kept in its original perfection, it can never be anything but a privilege to men who love God and enjoy the exercises of religion.

It may be asked, "If the observance of the Sabbath was not a burden to the Hebrews, why was it fenced about with commands and prohibitions and penalties and promises and threatenings? If it was only a blessing and was regarded as a privilege, why was it not enough simply to suggest it to them and leave them to enjoy it?" How little does one know of human nature who could ask that question! Has it not always been true that men have rejected and abused the choicest blessings which God offers them? The gift of his Son was the greatest blessing he could bestow upon the world; and yet men despised and rejected him. Salvation through Christ far transcends in value anything else men are capable of receiving; and yet, when it is urged upon them with all the powers of persuasion which the Christian teacher and preacher can use, the majority despise it. Christianity as taught by its divine Founder and the inspired apostles

seems simple enough, and its gospel comes laden with choicest gifts for a world that sorely needs them; and yet it has sometimes been so perverted as to be a curse to society, and deeds of infernal wickedness have been committed in the name of heaven's Prince. Nothing, however great a blessing it may be, can be safely committed to the keeping of men without placing safeguards around it in the shape of strict regulations concerning its proper use. In the early ages this was even more true than now; hence the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was both a legal requirement and a great privilege. All that made it a blessing has been preserved in the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath. We ought by this time to be able to appreciate the beneficent character of the institution. After these centuries of education, all men in Christian lands ought to see that in despising and desecrating the Sabbath they are trampling on one of heaven's choicest gifts. But it is sadly true that many must still be constrained to regard it, if they observe it at all, by the force of law, by fear of the threatened penalties or by appeals to conscience. We have seen the importance of the Jewish Sabbath to the Jewish people. The Lord's day certainly cannot be less to us: we hope to show that it is far more. In this, as in

other things, the fullness of blessing was reserved for us who have seen the coming of Christ's kingdom. "For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious."\* If "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath . . . done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"† The blackest and most damnable of sins is to trample upon the offerings of divine goodness. Have we not learned enough already to convince us that the Sabbath is among these gifts of love?

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\* 2 Corinthians 3 : 11.

† Hebrews 10 : 28, 29.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE LORD'S DAY.

The Sundays of man's life,  
Threaded together on time's string,  
Make bracelets to adorn the wife  
Of the eternal, glorious King.  
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope ;  
Blessings are plentiful and rife—  
More plentiful than hope.

GEORGE HERBERT.

WE have seen that the reformers, of whom Nehemiah was chief, and the later prophets made much, in their teaching, of a careful regard for the Sabbath. It was an almost inevitable consequence of this that the Hebrews of subsequent times should form strict rules concerning its observance. As formalism came more and more to characterize their religious life, it was equally certain that literal obedience of these rules would be regarded as essential to a life of godliness. No doubt the rabbis exaggerated the relative importance of the Sabbath itself. According to the Talmud, "the Sabbath is in importance equal to the whole law." Again, it says, "He who shall duly observe all the rites and customs of the Sabbath shall obtain the pardon of all his

sins, even though he hath been guilty of idolatry." That such statements are false and ridiculous is sufficiently evident. But they were not half so mischievous as the endless prohibitions which the rabbis formulated for the regulation of conduct on the Sabbath. In every conceivable way they perverted the teaching of the inspired men who had spoken in earlier times. Because Jeremiah had said that they should "bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day,"\* they made it a sin for the man whom Christ healed to carry home the light mattress on which the Oriental sleeps.† Even the plucking of a few heads of wheat was reaping, and rubbing them in the hands was threshing.‡ Some of their rules were puerile and ridiculous almost beyond description. One might not catch a flea on the Sabbath, unless he were actually biting, for that would be a kind of hunting. One ought not to wear nailed shoes, for that would be a kind of burden-bearing. One ought not to walk on grass, for that would be a kind of threshing. If one fed his chickens, he must not let any scattered kernels lie upon the ground to germinate, for that would be a kind of

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\* Jeremiah 17 : 24.

† Matthew 12 : 2.

‡ John 5 : 10.



sowing. From the command\* not to go out of the camp on the Sabbath, one school of rabbis deduced the rule that one must remain absolutely motionless from morning to night. Another interpretation of this command was that one might travel exactly two thousand cubits on that day. Long and precise rules were given as to what kinds of knots might and might not be tied. It was unlawful to make two letters except under certain carefully-defined conditions. How much food one might carry from one place to another was settled by exact weights and measurements. On Friday afternoon one must search his pockets to see whether they contained anything which it would be unlawful to carry on the Sabbath. Some of the modern disciples of these teachers will not even carry a handkerchief except within the walls of a city, or wind a watch, on that day. Giving an emetic or setting a broken bone was forbidden.† We need not go further with our examination of these rules to see that the men who formed them had utterly perverted the law of the Sabbath, and had no just conception of its purpose. In the time of the

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\* Exodus 16 : 29.

† For fuller information on rabbinical views of the Sabbath, etc., see the Talmud, Edersheim's "Jewish Social Life," and Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. ii. pp. 95-105.

Maccabæan heroes the Jews had shown a grand fidelity to their convictions in this matter, for we are told that on one occasion, when they were attacked on the Sabbath by the soldiers of Pompey, they refused to profane the day by fighting, and died in their tracks.\* “The Jewish sailor had refused, even when threatened with death, to touch the helm a moment after the sun had set on Friday, though a storm was raging.” But the Pharisees of Christ’s time, while still insisting upon obedience to these rules, found many ways to elude them, and thus showed their hollow-heartedness and hypocrisy.

In preparing the way for the transformation of the Jewish Sabbath into the Lord’s day, the first thing Christ had to do was to free it of these abuses. In order to do this he purposely brought on a conflict with the Pharisees concerning the proper method of observing it. He himself did and allowed his disciples to do what they thought to be violations of the Sabbath. On at least three different occasions † he healed the sick, when he knew that his action would subject him to the charge of Sabbath-breaking. Although he saw that spies were watching them, he permitted his

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\* Josephus: “Against Apion,” bk. i. sec. 22; Apocrypha: 1 Maccabees 2.

† Matthew 12:13; Luke 13:11; John 5:8.

disciples, unrebuked, to pluck the heads of wheat. His purpose must have been to throw the strongest possible light upon that institution, revealing its true nature and showing at the same time how the rabbis had corrupted it. So far his work was mainly restorative. He cleared away the rubbish that had gathered upon this divine institution. The old foundation was to remain, but the Jews had built wrongly upon it. Before a new structure could be erected their monstrous and ungainly building must be torn down. His kingdom was to be one of light and joy and liberty, and no such dark and repulsive prison-house as the Jews had made the Sabbath could be allowed within its borders. So far as the nature of the Sabbath is defined in the laws of Moses and revealed in the early history of the Jews, there was very little about it which Christ changed. Whatever change he made was in the direction of giving larger liberty to the judgment and conscience of the individual; and this not by laying down explicit directions for observing it, but by doing or allowing things which violated the rules of the rabbis. When he told the impotent man to take up his bed and walk, and permitted his disciples to pluck the heads of wheat, he meant to teach that it was contrary to the nature of the true Sabbath to formulate precise and minute rules for its ob-

servance. To a certain extent it had been a day of restraint to the Hebrews, and this characteristic had made it possible to overlay it with such rules; but he who was "Lord even of the Sabbath day" taught that such a course was calculated to make it a day of bondage—a burden instead of a blessing. The law that it was to be kept holy unto the Lord was still in force; but let each man who feels the obligation of that law and the desire to obey it decide for himself *how* to keep it. These puerile and exasperating rules made it impossible to keep the Sabbath in the right spirit—to keep it so as to derive the greatest benefit from its observance. Hence Christ freed it from every restraint which was not essential to the preservation of the institution itself. He took away the minute and particular rules, and left the broad general law that the Sabbath was to be a day of rest and worship. This was mainly a work of restoration, for these rules were the result of an abuse of the original law of the Sabbath. But while he was correcting the abuses with which it was beset, he brought out strongly certain characteristics of the true Sabbath which he meant to preserve for his people. He nowhere so much as intimates that it was not to remain a day of rest from secular toil; and yet he teaches that it is to be a day of activity. He sets him-

self strongly against the false notion held in his time that works of mercy were violations of a command which forbade only *servile work* and *business* carried on for gain. How pregnant with meaning are the words which he uses in his reply to those who persecuted him for healing the poor impotent man at the pool of Bethesda!—"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." They were not to suppose that God's Sabbath meant a season of quiescence, of cessation from all activity. If he rested in the sense in which they understood it—if he ceased from all beneficent labor—the world could not turn upon its axis and the sun could not rise and set; the seasons could not come in their regular round; the sun would cease to shine, the winds to blow, the rains to fall; and flowers could not bloom, seeds could not bring forth after their kind, no living creature could maintain its existence; in a word, if this long Sabbath day of God which is now passing were not crowded full of benevolent works, the world in which we live would be a dead and barren thing instead of a fit and beautiful habitation for man. But not alone in nature does God work. This Sabbath day of his is "the day of salvation"—the day in which he is working, with might and energy which we cannot measure, for the redemption

of the world. His selection of the Hebrew people to be the recipients of his revealed truth; his training of them through the law and through his providential dealings; the appointment of men to act as law-givers, kings and prophets; the inspiration of men to write the Bible; the gift of his Son; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; the establishment of the Church and the bestowment of pastors and evangelists upon it,—all these works the Father has done in his Sabbath. Here, then, was Christ's warrant for doing on the Sabbath any work that would bless men and further the establishment of his kingdom.

The important fact is to be noticed that the works which he performed on the Sabbath were either works of mercy or religious work. We divide them into these two classes, for the division is very significant and instructive. He healed the sick, and that was a work of mercy. He taught in the synagogues and at private houses, and that was religious work. We read, "When the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many, hearing *him*, were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things?"\* "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, *as his custom was,*

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\* Mark 6 : 2.



he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”\* “And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.”† “He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.”‡ Why did he thus teach in the synagogues? The obvious answer is, in order that he might do men good. He had the truth which it was necessary for them to hear. He had come from heaven with a message which he must deliver, and here were his opportunities. His love for the souls of men would not suffer them to remain in darkness, when he could be “the light of the world.”

Thus his conduct throws light upon the nature of the Lord's day, which was to be the Sabbath day in his kingdom. The Mosaic law was mainly composed of prohibitions; the distinguishing characteristic of the law of Christ is that it requires men to do good. To be a member of Christ's kingdom it is not enough to be without sin and guilty of no wrong-doing: one must also have positive virtues and graces, and perform deeds of love. Indeed, the method of Christ in the salvation of men is to expel evil from their hearts and lives by filling them with good.

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\* Luke 4 : 16.

‡ *Ibid.*, 13 : 10.

† *Ibid.*, 4 : 31.

Christ is our pattern and example. A life that is not full of benevolent deeds is in no sense a *Christian* life. Now, the nature of the Lord's day is to be determined by the nature of the Christian system of which it forms an integral part. It is to be a sample of the whole Christian life, differing from other days only in that it furnishes opportunity for a fuller expression of the spirit which must underlie the work of every day. It is to be a day of intense activity. The rest that it affords is the rest of change, not that of complete stagnation. This activity is to be benevolent. One day in seven is thus set apart in order that Christians may devote themselves without hindrance to the welfare of others. On that day they are to attend the services at the Lord's house—not that they may be entertained, but in order that his cause may be promoted. On that day, after the manner of Christ in the synagogue, they are to teach the word of life to those who are ignorant, that the Lord may be made known and his will done in the earth. On that day especially they are to give of their substance as the Lord has prospered them, in order that the gospel may be carried to all the world. On that day they are to visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, relieve the distressed, and “send portions to them that have not.” For remember

that it is *the Lord's day*—the day on which we commemorate the finished work of him who came into the world to save the lost, and died on the cross for their redemption. The day is sacred to him who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”\* The only way in which such a day can be fitly kept is by filling it with deeds of loving devotion to the welfare of others. In no other way can it be made the Lord's day.

This is certainly an advance on the Jewish Sabbath, just as Christianity is an advance on Judaism. That was a day for rest and worship and the study of the law, and for family gatherings; but it was not strongly marked as a day for doing good to those who were in need. Judaism was exclusive, and so the Jew had little thought of going beyond himself and his family to give the light of truth to those who were in darkness. Christianity is inclusive, and all the world is to be gathered to Christ. He died for all souls; his heart is most tenderly moved toward those that are farthest away from God; and the Christian must share this feeling of his Lord for the lost, and express it by working for their salvation. The Lord's day is not

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\* Matthew 20 : 28.

the only day on which he is to do this, but it is especially consecrated to that purpose. Thus the day takes its character from the character of Christianity.

It may be objected that such a day is not a day of rest, in any proper sense of the word. It is not meant that every hour of the Lord's day is to be used in this way. We are not discussing the specific subject of how to employ its hours; we are only striving to define the purpose and nature of the day. However, in answer to the objection it may be said that the truest rest and refreshment are found in a change of occupation. The men and women who have been engaged all the week in manual toil can rest their bodies, while doing these works of Christian charity, as well as they could if they spent the day in sleep or complete idleness. The mind never needs absolute rest; and nothing recuperates the mind-worn body so well as becoming interested in new subjects of thought and objects of attention. He who comes to the Lord's day in the right spirit will rejoice that he has opportunity to engage in works appropriate to it. Turning aside from the toil and care of his worldly calling and giving himself for one day in seven to the performance of Christ-like deeds, he will feel like the school-boy escaping from his tasks for his day or hour

of play. Now we all know that play is the best kind of rest; and play is what one likes to do, coming as a relief from doing what one dislikes. The Lord's day is thus a play-day to one who loves good works, for it is the day on which he may best gratify his holy desires. To him who cannot thus enjoy it, it still remains a yoke of bondage under which he must put his neck, hoping that as the Spirit of God works within him, it may become an "easy" yoke.

This idea of Sabbath rest in the midst of activity on the Lord's day is that which renders it the most perfect type of the rest which "remaineth to the people of God." For when we feel that we are saved, not by our own striving but by the finished work of Christ—when we feel that his blood applied to our hearts gives us the "peace that passeth all understanding"—then it is that our souls are moved as by a mighty and irresistible instinct to work for God. The rest from the stings of a guilty conscience and from the slavery of the ever-threatening law is not the rest of idleness, but of ceaseless activity in works prompted by love and gratitude to him who hath redeemed us. Paradoxical as it may sound, the conviction that we can do nothing in working out our own salvation is the primary source of all work for the glory of God. And in such work there is com-

plete rest of heart—rest from fear toward God and from envy and disappointment and every ungratified desire in our relations with men. The work becomes a joy and so a source of rest to the soul. It will be so in the world to come. The rest of heaven is not inaction. God has not redeemed us at such infinite cost and trained us with such patient care simply that we may enjoy a heaven which could be a delight only to a person of unspeakable laziness. We are redeemed and trained for service,—but a service which will be a delight, a service without friction or worry or disgust, a service in which perfect rest and intensest activity can be combined. In such a rest the rational spirit can find a perfect heaven. Thus the Lord's day, rightly understood, points to that perfect rest for which every sin-burdened but struggling soul longs with unutterable desire.

The apostles accepted their Lord's view of the Sabbath. Their loyalty to him would not allow them knowingly to act contrary to his will. The Holy Spirit, by whom they were inspired, would enable them to know his will on this as on every subject. Hence we find that they celebrated the Lord's day, not in idleness on the one hand nor in roistering and mirth on the other, but in the worship of God and in earnest work for the Master. It has already been remarked that Christ's



disputes with the Pharisees on the nature of the Sabbath imply that he discountenanced the laying down of formal and precise rules for its observance. In perfect keeping with this, the apostles say nothing with regard to what is lawful or unlawful on the Lord's day. Their example teaches us what should be done on that day, but they lay no prohibitions upon the consciences of Christians concerning it. This does not imply that they regarded the manner of observing it as a matter of indifference. They felt that the original Sabbath law, in its essential features, was still in force, and were content to leave it as it had been given. They would not go beyond their Lord in telling men what they must or must not do. They would not make the dreadful mistake of the rabbis and try to tell exactly how every minute of the Lord's day should be disposed of. The Christian Church was not to be subjected to that sort of bondage. However, this larger liberty, as we learn from their teaching on other topics, was not to be construed into license. Christians must still obey the law of the Sabbath, but they might judge for themselves what particular acts would violate it. The time had come when the purpose of the Sabbath could be understood, and those Christians who were anxious to make it serve that purpose would do

nothing to defeat it. Thus the Lord's day differs from the Jewish Sabbath in the *motive* to which it appeals. While the latter was not a day of burdensome restraints, its sanctity was guarded by emphatically-expressed laws, the violator of which incurred severe penalties. Fear restrained the Jews from disobedience of the law, and impelled them to obey it. It was not designed that fear should have any place in securing obedience to the law on the part of Christians. It is supposed that they are brought into such nearness to God that they will love to obey his laws. Their education is so far advanced that they can see the reason for obeying. Young children must often obey their parents blindly, not knowing *why* they are commanded to do this or that. Slaves are always expected to render to their masters that kind of obedience; but he is not a wise parent who arbitrarily asserts his authority over his half-grown children and conceals from them the reasons for his commands. They are still obliged to obey him; but he should base his claim to obedience on the knowledge of what is best which they can now share with him. Thus they become friends and allies instead of dependents and possible antagonists. God is dealing in the same way with his people. He takes them into a sort of partnership with himself, and says to them, in

effect, "Your interest will be subserved by obedience to this law. Obey, not from a sense of fear, but because you are able to see that the law is holy, just and good, and that you will injure yourself by disobeying. Do not feel that I could have any other reason for placing this command upon you than a desire to secure your highest good." Not many of those who lived before Christ could have understood that. Respecting the apprehension of divine truth, they were children. Let us be thankful that God has given us greater light and liberty, but let us not find in it a reason for disobeying the fourth commandment.

Here we may find the explanation of the fact that the death penalty for violating the Sabbath has been abolished. It was inflicted in the early history of the institution, and some argue that because it is done away, the law of the Sabbath is annulled. The argument proves too much, for, under the Mosaic law, stubborn and rebellious children were liable to death.\* Because this penalty is no longer inflicted, does it follow that children are now less guilty than formerly if they abuse their parents? But the argument is worse than fallacious. Those who advance it show that they have mistaken a change in God's method of

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\* Exodus 21 : 15, 17 ; Deuteronomy 21 : 18, 21.

dealing with us, for a change in the duties which we owe to him, to ourselves and to our fellow men. Under the Christian dispensation no sin, however enormous it may be, receives immediately its full punishment. The state may punish crimes, but can inflict no penalty for sins. This is the day of salvation, not the day of judgment; that is coming hereafter. The disciples, angry with certain Samaritans because they had not given Jesus a good reception, asked, "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" His answer was a sharp rebuke: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*."\* While the race was in the primary school of God, the nature of sin could be revealed only by inflicting severe penalties upon transgressors. The lesson having now been given and the minds of men who heed God's voice having been enlightened, we can see that sin may best be left to work out its own penalty. Ananias and Sapphira were smitten dead for lying about their property. Because those who tell similar lies now are not so punished, does it follow that their sin is less? That was a special case, and

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\* Luke 9 : 54-56.

designed to give a terrible warning to the Church at the very beginning of its history. At the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation a similar mark was put upon the sin of violating the Sabbath; but now, while the sin is just the same, the penalty is not inflicted. Those who break the Sabbath are not stoned to death; they are left to receive in their own souls and bodies the natural consequences of their sin. Since this is the day of salvation, opportunity for repentance is given; but if they do not repent, their punishment will be worse than stoning. Even in this life they will become morally degraded and physically enervated. Their souls will be farther and farther separated from God, and thus fitted for an eternal imprisonment in "outer darkness." They have had ample instruction and warning; but "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."\* If men were stoned to death now for Sabbath-breaking, very few would be guilty of it. Let it be known that the sin is not less because the penalty is changed.

We are now prepared to examine in detail the differences and resemblances between the Jewish

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\* Ecclesiastes 8 : 11.

Sabbath and the Lord's day. Most of these have been noticed in previous parts of the discussion; but it is desirable that they be grouped together in a brief summary. In what do they agree and in what do they differ?

In respect to their *essential nature* they are one and the same institution. The foundation of both is the fourth commandment, which forms part of the moral law; but while they are both commanded, neither was meant to be a burden, and the Lord's day especially is a day of liberty and rejoicing. In this they are slightly different, the Lord's day having less of prohibitory restraint, and the motive for keeping it being love for Christ rather than fear of penalty.

Both are *memorial* days. The Jewish Sabbath was designed to commemorate the work of creation and the rest of God which followed it. The Lord's day serves the same end. With the six days of work which precede it, it furnishes the same reminder of God's creative work and his subsequent rest. But here there is a difference as well as an agreement. The Jewish Sabbath was made commemorative of the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage; the Lord's day commemorates the deliverance of the world from the bondage and curse of sin by the Redeemer. In this respect the glory of the Lord's



day is infinitely greater than of that which has passed away. If the Jews cared to celebrate the day which reminded them of their former bondage and present liberty, much more ought we to celebrate the day on which Christ proved himself the conqueror of death and hell. As memorials of deliverance, they both teach, to those for whom they were designed, lessons of humility and gratitude.

Both are *prophetic* of a higher and more perfect rest than they have given or can give. Both point to the rest of the soul in God through faith in the Lord Jesus—the one dimly, the other with clearer symbol—and to the perfect rest which can come only when all the toils and cares of this life are over.

Both were designed for the *benefit* of man, affording him opportunities for rest and for the cultivation of his religious nature. In this respect the only difference is that the Lord's day, being commemorative of greater events and taking its character more from the gospel dispensation, is calculated to be far more useful to Christians than it was possible for the Jewish Sabbath to be to the most devout Hebrew.

They differ in respect to the *day of the week* on which they should be observed. The Jewish Sabbath came upon the seventh, the Lord's day

is the first, day of the week. This change was made by the authority of the inspired apostles, and does not affect the nature of the institution. The particular day of the week on which it should be observed was a *positive*, not a moral, element of the Sabbath law, and is abolished. It is commonly asserted that the proportion of time was also positive, and that the only moral element is the duty of setting apart *some* portion of time to the service of God. This may be true; but it is not worth while to dispute about it, for the apostles retained the seventh-day division in the establishment of the Lord's day, and thus the proportion of time is forever fixed.

In so far as the Jewish Sabbath was commemorative of the deliverance from Egypt, it was *local*. This feature of it could have no interest for any other people. But the Lord's day is to be *universal*. Wherever men acknowledge the lordship of Christ, his day will be observed. It is prophesied in holy writ that he is to be king over the whole earth: "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.”\* It is scarcely conceivable that the religion of Christ can be anywhere established and the Lord’s day not be there observed. There can hardly be preaching of the gospel in any systematic way without this institution. It is quite certain that as soon as love and loyalty to Christ begin to be felt in the hearts of men, they are glad to keep holy the Lord’s day. Its promise of universality separates it widely from the Jewish Sabbath. The latter could never have found general acceptance. The fact that for centuries no other people had kept the Sabbath left the impression upon the minds of the Gentiles that it was altogether a Jewish institution. This would have rendered futile any attempt to make it universal. It was, no doubt, for this reason, among others, that the day of the week was changed, and that other changes were made adapting the institution to the needs of the Christian Church. There is nothing in the nature of the Lord’s day to prevent its universal adoption by all those who receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and King.

And this leads to the notice of another striking difference between them. To a certain extent the Jewish Sabbath took its character from the religious system of the Hebrews. It was so con-

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\* Philippians 2: 9-11.

nected with every part of that system that such a conformity was inevitable. It was a Jewish festival whose observance did not require them to consider the welfare of any one who was not a Jew. But this was no more true of the Sabbath than of any other feature of Judaism, and does not argue that it was made for them alone. The peculiar forms of their religious system modified the original Sabbath. The essentials remained the same, but it took on enough of Jewish shape to make it necessary to reform it for the Christian Church. Even as the Jew observed it, it could not differ materially from the Lord's day, for the same God established both, for essentially the same purpose. Still, as known among them it was the *Jewish* Sabbath. On the other hand, the Lord's day is distinctively a *Christian* institution. The reason for observing it on the first day of the week is to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. It is to be kept in the spirit of Christ. It is to be marked by such deeds in behalf of men as signalized the life of Christ. It is to be so used as to promote the extension of the kingdom of Christ. It symbolizes the perfect rest which comes to the soul only by means of faith in Christ. Thus it is peculiarly adapted to the needs of the followers of Christ.

In conclusion, we may observe that it is im-

possible to see how the Lord's day is any less important to Christians and to the whole world than was the Sabbath to the Hebrews. On the contrary, it is much more important. It is the heir of all that was essential and of all that would be useful to the world in the Jewish Sabbath. Every feature in which the Lord's day differs from its prototype is an improvement. The changes in this institution conform to the law of growth according to which the establishment of God's kingdom among men has been accomplished. Every purpose which could be served by the Jewish Sabbath can be better served by the Lord's day. We have seen how the importance of the former was impressed upon the minds of the Jews by its association with the greatest events known to men. But the resurrection of Christ, with which the Lord's day is associated, was an event greater even than the creation. We have seen that the principal reason for giving this importance to the Sabbath of the Jews was that it was vitally related to their religion. But the Lord's day is even more closely connected with the extension and maintenance of Christianity, which is to Judaism as the glory of noonday compared with the dim light of the early morning. Judaism was but the scaffolding of the great temple which God was building in the world.

The Sabbath, as the Jews knew it, was an important part of that scaffolding; but the Lord's day is an important part of the temple itself. By its commemoration of our Lord's resurrection, by its conformity to the *genius* of Christianity, by its spirituality, by its demand for the performance of benevolent deeds, it becomes a powerful instrument in the redemption of the race. If God made the Jew feel that it was necessary for him carefully to observe the Sabbath, much more are we made to feel that it is unspeakably important for us to keep sacred the Lord's day. We admit that men are saved by the power of God. We admit that gospel truth is the instrument which he uses. Nevertheless, we hold that the hope of the world is in the preservation of the Lord's day in all its purity. Destroy this, and soon no gospel could be preached, no religious services could be held; Christ would be forgotten and his religion banished from the face of the earth. Judaism could not live without its Sabbath. Without the Lord's day, Christianity would soon be but a glorious memory. If it is important to have men saved from sin and its awful consequences—if it is important to have the human race go forward in working out a noble destiny—it is important for all men to remember the perpetual obligation of the Lord's day.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE PROPER METHOD OF OBSERVING THE LORD'S DAY.

Now let us repose from our care and our sorrow,  
Let all that is anxious and sad pass away ;  
The rough cares of life lay aside till to-morrow,  
And let us be tranquil and happy to-day.

Let us say to the world, should it tempt us to wander—  
As Abraham said to his men on the plain—  
There's the mountain of prayer, I am going up yonder,  
And tarry you here till I seek you again.

JAMES EDMESTON.

Our study of the nature and purpose of the Sabbath, in the two previous chapters, has prepared the way for a discussion of the proper method of observing it. It has almost dispensed with the necessity for such a discussion. Every person who perceives the ends which the Sabbath was designed to accomplish can decide for himself what lines of conduct are consistent with that purpose. At the most, we can deal only with general principles. To attempt to lay down specific rules, prescribing exactly what must be abstained from and what done on Sunday, would result in giving the institution the repulsive character that it had under the teaching of the rabbis.

The gospel of Christ is a gospel of liberty ; and while there was some excuse for such restrictions under a dispensation of law, there can be none whatever for them under the present dispensation. Furthermore, rules that would be applicable in one case would not apply at all in another. The circumstances of different individuals vary so widely that what would be permissible for one might be clearly wrong for another. The same diversity of circumstances at different periods in the life of the same person would have to be provided for in any set of rules for the observance of the Sabbath. It follows that much must be left to the individual conscience. While the law is plain and explicit that the Lord's day should be kept holy, just *how* it is to be done each man must decide for himself. This is the method of legislation and instruction which pervades the whole New Testament. Hundreds of questions arise to which no specific answer is given by Christ or his inspired apostles. They knew that minute rules for the regulation of the whole life could not be given within the compass of a book which any one would read. They also knew—and this is far more important—that the only way to build up strong and beautiful character is to allow the individual to govern his own life in accordance with certain general principles

of conduct. Always to swim on a float does not make a strong and active swimmer; and always to be in the leading-strings of precise rules cripples the mental faculties, and prevents the development of the moral sense.

The general law of the Sabbath is, keep steadily in mind the purposes for which it was established. Whatever is calculated to defeat these purposes, in respect either to ourselves or others, is prohibited; whatever is calculated to promote them is required. We have discovered that the purposes of the Sabbath are to secure needed rest for the body, to give those engaged in manual labor opportunity to improve their mental and social condition, and to promote the religious welfare of man. The last is the most important. It was to accomplish this that the Sabbath was made a memorial of creation and of redemption, that it was set apart for the worship of God, and that it was made a type of spiritual and eternal rest. Now, in respect to specific actions, any man ought to be able to decide whether they are calculated to defeat or to promote these purposes. It is only by way of expanding and illustrating this general principle that we undertake the discussion of the proper method of keeping the Lord's day.

The subject naturally divides itself into three

parts: 1. Things prohibited: actions which are plainly violations of the law of the Sabbath. 2. Things allowable: actions which in some circumstances would be inconsistent with the purposes of the Sabbath, but which, in other circumstances, are justifiable by a higher law than that of the Sabbath, or are necessary to the accomplishment of its purposes. 3. Things required: duties peculiarly appropriate to the Sabbath, and for the performance of which it was appointed.

I. THINGS PROHIBITED ON THE LORD'S DAY.—  
Many difficulties beset this part of the subject. The path to a right judgment on every question that can arise is by no means easy and plain. And the difficulties are increased by the fact that the teaching of Christ and his apostles concerning the Sabbath contains no prohibitions or declarations of what is unlawful on that day. Hence we must go to the fourth commandment and to the Old Testament expositions of it for any express prohibitions. But we are not shut up to these, for the purpose of the Sabbath appears more clearly in the words of Christ than in any other part of the Bible; and it is by keeping in mind that purpose that we are able to formulate prohibitory laws concerning it. Whatever tends to defeat the purpose of the Sabbath is wrong, and therefore prohibited. The statute does not make it wrong, but it is forbid-

den by the statute because it is wrong in the nature of the case. In this discussion the word "prohibited" is not applied only to that which is forbidden by an express command, but also to whatever is, in its nature or tendency, antagonistic to the Sabbath. Adopting this as our principle, we shall find that the law of the Sabbath forbids—

1. *All labor for gain.* This is evident both from the terms of the commandment and from the purpose of the Sabbath. The word in the fourth commandment which is translated "work" means *servile* work—primarily, such work as could be done by means of servants; more widely, all kinds of business. That it included the latter is plain from the prohibitions against buying and selling which we find in Nehemiah. We have seen that the disciples of Christ did not pursue their ordinary avocations on the Sabbath day, since, if they had, it would certainly have been recorded against them.

That it is required by the commandment is not the only reason for abstaining from work for gain on the Lord's day. Such work would have a direct tendency to defeat every purpose of the institution. Entire cessation from the ordinary pursuits of the week is at the foundation of Sabbath observance. Without this, its purpose to

give rest to the exhausted body of the toiler, to provide opportunity for mental improvement and social culture, and to promote the religious development of all men, could not be accomplished. To secure any one of these objects requires complete abstinence from all kinds of secular work. It may be asked whether such work on the Lord's day is in itself wrong—whether a part of the day might not be used for it without defeating its purpose, allowing each one to choose for himself what portion of the day he needs for rest and religious exercises. It has already been determined that one seventh of the time must be redeemed from toil for these purposes. This is the divine arrangement; and whenever men have tried to be wiser than God, they have soon found out their folly. Men are so bound together that some cannot rest unless all do.

But these are not the only reasons for the prohibition of all secular toil on the Lord's day. The constant tendency is for the pursuit of gain to encroach upon the higher interests. So worldly and greedy of gain are men by nature, so prone are they to forget all their spiritual interests in their eagerness for things that can be seen and handled, that if they were allowed to use any part of the Lord's day for secular work they would soon come to use it all in that way.



Where a community or a people has accepted the theory that work on the Lord's day is not wrong *per se*, that it is only a question of expediency, and that, in determining what is expedient, absolute cessation from Sunday work is not to be considered, but only the amount which it is advisable to do, the day has become thoroughly secularized and the Sabbath practically destroyed. It is wrong to do any amount of work for gain upon the Lord's day, not only because it takes part of the time set apart for higher uses, but also because the tendency of doing a little is to lead us on to do more, until the Sabbath disappears altogether. It is the old story of the sea of sin making a small break in the dyke, which the overflowing stream gradually wears larger, so that it lets in more and more of the flood, until the fair fields of life are devastated.

This tendency is directly contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Christ and his apostles would have us think just as little as possible of the things of this world, and to give our attention mainly to preparation for the world to come. They would not have us allow the pursuit of worldly gain to encroach upon the hours devoted to religious purposes, but would, rather, have us carry the spirit of the Lord's day into the other days of the week. The Sabbath was intended to

serve as a check to the spirit of worldliness. So far as it is occupied with work for gain, this purpose is defeated. It is evident that the rule concerning the Lord's day must be, "in it thou shalt do no manner of work" the direct object of which is to make money. To this rule there are no exceptions. On that day men are not permitted to work with their hands, with their brains, or by means of servants, if the moving impulse to such work is the desire for gain. This law is very simple, and no one need find any difficulty in applying it to specific cases. It forbids the manual toil of the laborer, the farmer and the mechanic, the exercise of the mind in the solution of business problems by the merchant and the professional man, and the employment of men to work in factories or mines, to print and sell newspapers, to run cars or ships, or to carry on any business which men do through servants. God is no respecter of persons. He does not say to the poor man, "You must not add to your slender income by working on the Lord's day," and then graciously permit the managers of a great railroad to run their cars on this day as on all others. There is one law for all, and that law is, no work for gain on the Lord's day. Whether an exception can be made in the case of those who do work on that day which seems necessary,

so far as to justify them in receiving the ordinary compensation for it, is a question the discussion of which properly belongs to the next topic. But the law that men are forbidden to engage, on Sunday, in any work or business to which they are prompted only by the desire to increase their worldly gains, is so grounded in the very nature and purpose of the institution that its necessity and justness will be admitted without further discussion.

2. *The law of the Sabbath forbids labor for any worldly end.* Men have other objects which are just as worldly as the attainment of wealth. The acquisition of knowledge, the cultivation of the mind, the increase of one's reputation and the improvement of one's social condition may all be sought in a worldly spirit. It may be said that the law of Christ forbids us to seek them with that spirit on any day, and that is true. But may they be sought at all on the Lord's day? May the student whose business in life is the attainment of knowledge carry on his studies on that day the same as on other days, justifying himself with the plea that he is gaining knowledge in order that he may be a more useful man in the world? May the author continue to write because one of his motives in writing is that he may do good? May the professional man—the

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lawyer, the physician or the editor—read hard on Sunday in the direct line of his profession, on the plea that he needs such reading and cannot get time for it on other days? In these and in all similar cases the answer must be a decided negative. Such work is calculated to defeat at least two purposes of the Sabbath. One is that of giving to men needed rest for mind and body. If the mind is used vigorously six days in the week, the seventh day should bring a complete change. Absolute inaction is not required, but there should be a change of subject,—a turning aside from the ordinary lines of work. The other is the purpose to provide for the cultivation of man's religious nature. These pursuits are secular. Though they do improve the mind, they have no tendency to draw men nearer to God. Indeed, few things are so fatal to the religious life as the exclusive occupation of the attention in mental pursuits. We have seen that the chief purpose of the Sabbath is to give men opportunities for religious development. Any pursuit that radically and fatally interferes with this is forbidden by the law of the Sabbath.

3. *This law forbids the pursuit of worldly pleasure on the Lord's day.* Here there is need of careful discrimination. If the law is too literally understood, one of two undesirable results will fol-

low. Either Sunday will become a day of gloom and unwholesome restraint, or the law will be despised and disobeyed. A misunderstanding of this part of the Sabbath law has actually led to these opposite but equally lamentable results, the one appearing in the case of the Puritans, the other in the case of those who have looked upon the Sabbath as an institution whose restrictions were unendurable.

In other parts of this discussion we have tried to show that the Sabbath was designed to be a day of rejoicing in the Lord. This was true even of the Jewish Sabbath. It was a day of joyful worship, of praise and thanksgiving, of cheerful intercourse with loved ones. The Lord's day, as commemorating Christ's triumph over death, is still more joyous in its character. When, therefore, we say that the law of the Sabbath forbids the pursuit of pleasure on that day, we must not be understood as meaning that it is wrong to make Sunday the most cheerful and happy day of the week. The enjoyment of rest, of freedom from the toils and cares and anxieties of the week, the joys of the sanctuary where hymns of praise and thanksgiving are sung in honor of the risen Lord, the pure delights of intercourse with the members of one's family, and the sweets of religious reading and meditation, belong to the proper observ-

ance of the Lord's day. For one to say that he can find no pleasure in these things is for him to condemn himself, and not the law of the Sabbath.

But we are here speaking of things prohibited, and must be more specific. The pleasure the pursuit of which on the Lord's day is forbidden is worldly or secular or carnal pleasure. It is such pleasure as is derived from theatres, dances, excursions, picnic parties, drives, hunting and fishing, novels, games, unusual eating and drinking, and all similar forms of indulgence. It is pleasure that consists in mental excitement, or diversion, or in the gratification of the bodily senses. While some of these sources of pleasure are perfectly legitimate, and may be employed at will on other days, they are forbidden on the Lord's day. The principal reason is the same as that given in the case of prohibited labors: the general tendency of such pleasure-seeking is to defeat every purpose of the Sabbath. One of these purposes is to secure needed rest for those who labor with brain or hands. It would be useless to deny that some form of recreation is needed by all toilers—simple rest is not enough—and it may be that there are persons who must obtain this needed recreation on the Lord's day or go without it. However that may be, we are not



now speaking of such cases, but only of the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake. When men devote Sunday to this purpose, instead of being refreshed for the labors of the week to follow, they go to their work on Monday morning fagged and exhausted. For example, it is claimed that Sunday excursions must be allowed, in order that the laboring people of the towns and cities may have a chance to get needed recreation and fresh air. What with the crowd, the hurry, the confusion, the excitement, the dissipation and the long hours of such an excursion, it is generally found that it exhausts the strength instead of renewing it. Ask any honest workman how he feels on the Monday morning after it, and he will reply that he is all tired out with yesterday's excursion, but that he will get over it in a day or two. He thus confesses that it has not served to renew his bodily strength. If drinking and carousing are added—as they too often are—he will be unfit for work for half the week. It is no uncommon thing for manufacturers to refuse to pay their workmen on Saturday, because so many of them will spend their wages and the hours of Sunday in the pursuit of “pleasure,” having so “good” a time that they cannot return to their work before Tuesday or Wednesday. Even innocent pleasures become injurious

when they deprive one of needed rest. The writer feels quite certain that the young men with whom he was associated in early life, all of whom had to labor on farms, impaired their physical health by playing ball, hunting, fishing and picking berries on Sunday, when they ought to have rested. On a Sunday afternoon in summer, when one sees in a great city the crowds of people packed into street-cars, half of them standing, as they return from the parks, and notes how hot and tired and hungry and fretful they seem, he cannot help feeling how much better off they would have been if they had spent the day in the cool, comfortable churches and in their own homes. A large number of employers report that of the two classes, church-goers and Sunday excursionists, the former were the better fitted for work on Monday morning. Of one hundred and fifty replies received nearly all testified in favor of church-goers. Most of them were very emphatic as to the disastrous effects upon the physical health of the ordinary Sunday excursion.\* No doubt there are forms of worldly pleasure which can be pursued on Sunday without injury to the body; but the tendency is as we have indicated. Seekers of pleasure, especially when

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\* See "The Sabbath for Man," pp. 209-214.

they give up one day in a week to its pursuit, are almost certain to run into excesses of some sort.

But if there are exceptions to the rule that Sunday pleasure-seeking is not good for the body, beyond question no form of it is good for the mind and heart. When one gives his weekdays to toil and his Sundays to amusement, he deprives himself of every chance of intellectual growth. He makes himself a mere beast of burden which, once a week, gets a day off for kicking up his heels in the pasture.

This method of spending the Sabbath also ignores its most important purpose, namely, the cultivation of man's religious nature. The day which was given us in order that we might have opportunity to prepare for heaven is used to get the most of earth. On Sundays we are to commemorate the creation of the world and the resurrection of Christ; we are to remember and worship God as the Creator and Redeemer. On that day we are to consider especially the interests of the immortal spirit, and to promote them by the study of the word, by worship, and by engaging in Christian work. This is the great end of the Lord's day; but how can it be reached if the day is given up to the pursuit of worldly pleasures? Man needs recreation, but far more he needs religious cultivation. Even needed bod-

ily refreshment is dearly bought at the sacrifice of his religious interests. To make a holiday of Sunday is completely to secularize it. If man has no holy day, he will soon forget God and the interests of his own soul.

It may be asked whether any part of the day may properly be devoted to pleasure-seeking; whether, part of it having been given to religious services, the rest may not be taken for amusement, after the manner of the Roman Catholics. No doubt a part of each Lord's day should be given to rest and recreation; but it must be such rest and recreation as will not destroy the religious influences of the day. One seventh of the time is none too much to devote unreservedly to the welfare of the soul. How much religious influence will remain from a day the larger part of which has been spent in the eager pursuit of worldly pleasure? No doubt the over-worked and over-anxious American people need more time for recreation than they are accustomed to take; but it does not follow that they should steal the time from the Lord, or from their own souls. The true method is to take time for necessary recreation during the week and keep the Lord's day intact for religious purposes. With the vast resources, the abundant provisions and the labor-saving ma-

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chinery of this country, very few need to work more than five or five and a half days in a week. This would be sufficient for the commonest laborer to earn a livelihood, if he were paid proper wages ; and some of the evils of over-production, about which we hear so much in times of business depression, would be diminished by such a custom. The time thus gained could be used for recreation or mental improvement, and Sunday would be left free for religious purposes. The Saturday half-holiday movement ought to receive the support of all who seek the welfare of their fellow men. Wherever it is possible for them to do it, employers should give this time without a decrease of wages.

Another very important reason why it is forbidden to use the Lord's day for pleasure-seeking is that such a course generally deprives others of the privilege of properly enjoying it. If some go upon the Sunday excursion, others, who run the cars and the steamboats and keep the places of refreshment, must work, in violation of their right to rest, and perhaps of their principles. If some have their Sunday paper, others must labor seven days in a week. The big Sunday dinner or the evening party compels the servants to work as hard on Sunday as on other days. The spirit of that old Hebrew law to do no cooking

on the Sabbath, in order that the servants of the household might rest, seems to be quite forgotten in our day. We boast of our humanity and of our sympathy with laboring people, but in this matter we are far behind the old Hebrews of three thousand years ago. The justice and mercy toward servants, which they were taught to exercise, are swallowed up in the selfishness of our times. We must gratify our appetites even at the expense of the rights and welfare of those who serve us. It is true of many of our Sunday pleasures that they can be obtained only by depriving others of their Sabbath. Even when we indulge on the Lord's day in that which does not require the service of others, we often interfere with their enjoyment of it, by destroying the quiet and peacefulness which it ought to have. But we do the greatest wrong to those who render us unnecessary service on that day. It may be said that if they render the service voluntarily and we pay them for it, no wrong is done. This is but a specious plea. Money is no adequate compensation to those who violate the Sabbath on our account. For money men have bartered their dearest treasures; women have sold their virtue and men their honor. In these cases does the payment of money render the purchasers guiltless? When we hire others



to break the Sabbath for us, we become not only Sabbath-breakers, but corrupters of mankind. We are guilty of a double sin.

Thus there are two important reasons for the divine prohibition against pleasure-seeking on the Lord's day. The first is that it defeats the purposes of the Sabbath, especially the great purpose of promoting man's religious welfare. The second is that its general tendency is to deprive others of the right to enjoy the Sabbath. We have found that substantially the same reasons exist for the law against labor for gain or any worldly end on that day. We must pass now to consider

## II. THINGS ALLOWABLE ON THE LORD'S DAY.—

This division seems necessary because every possible action on the Sabbath cannot be classified as prohibited or required. Some things are allowable at one time and prohibited at another. Peculiar circumstances may justify a course of action on the Lord's day without making it obligatory. And then, there are classes of actions which one may or may not perform and still keep the Sabbath holy. Of things allowable it is necessary to mention only those which are most likely to enter into the life of the ordinary individual.

1. *First among them are works of necessity.* These are labors which are necessary to save

human life or health, or to rescue property from impending destruction. There can be no question that any amount of labor to save life would be justifiable on the Sabbath. Indeed, we might have classed such work under things required, but for the fact that it is required on all days alike. It is equally clear that we are permitted to do whatever is necessary for the restoration of health to the sick. They must have medical attendance and nursing on the Lord's day the same as on other days, and often the labors of those who care for them are heavy and arduous. But who can doubt that such labors are not only justifiable, but that the omission of them would be a sin? The question might fairly be raised whether physicians and others who attend the sick should not refuse to take pay for what they do on the Lord's day. It is a question which they must answer for themselves. Perhaps if physicians undertook to do their Sunday work gratuitously, they would find it impossible on account of a consequent tendency of people to make that the day for all their sicknesses. But whether it be done as a work of mercy or as "business," all necessary care of the sick is allowable on the Lord's day.

Careful discrimination ought to be made with reference to work for the saving of property.

That it is justifiable to a certain extent seems to be clear from the teaching of our Saviour. When he asked the ruler of the synagogue, who accused him of violating the Sabbath because he had healed that day an afflicted woman, "Doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?"\* he certainly approved their doing so; for otherwise there would have been no force in his argument. If property were being destroyed on Sunday by fire or flood, no one could doubt the right of the owner and his friends to put forth every effort to save it. Domestic animals must be cared for on the Lord's day, lest they suffer pain and their owners be subjected to loss. In some kinds of business a certain amount of routine work must be done on Sunday. For example, on dairy farms the cows must be milked and some disposition must be made of the product. In some kinds of manufacturing the work cannot wholly stop on Sunday, lest large quantities of goods be damaged or destroyed. In every household some work must be done on the Lord's day. Many other instances might be mentioned in which Sunday work seems necessary, and therefore allowable. In all such cases the law is that

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\* Luke 13 : 15.

*only* necessary work should be done. Many claim that work is necessary, when the necessity is created wholly by their own inordinate desire for gain. Because Christ said, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?" \* and thus approved such an action, they claim that, no matter by what means property is jeopardized, it is right to work on Sunday to save it. For example, a farmer will cut down a quantity of hay or grain on Saturday and claim that it must be taken up on Sunday to keep it from spoiling. It is evident that a little calculation, or a slight sacrifice in delaying his work, would have obviated the necessity. But here we open the very broad question of what is necessary work. It is claimed that the methods, the extent and the complications of modern business, and the crowding of vast numbers of people together in the cities, make absolutely necessary a great amount of work on the Lord's day. The horse-cars, the cars on the elevated roads, and the steam-cars, must run to accommodate churchgoers and excursionists. Drug-stores and groceries must remain open, and milkmen and bakers and icemen must go their regular rounds, in order

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\* Luke 14 : 5.

that people may have the necessities of life. We must have our Sunday dailies; and so editors, compositors, pressmen and newsdealers must work seven days in a week. The amount of freight to be carried on the railroads is so great that much of it must be moved on Sunday, when the ordinary number of passenger trains is diminished. So many people are willing to save time by travelling on Sunday that the managers of the roads find it necessary to favor the public, for whose service they live, with a few Sunday trains. We might add almost indefinitely to the apparent necessities for Sunday labor which have arisen in our modern civilization. The question which every man who seeks to obey God's law must ask himself is, How much of this work is really necessary? Any one who gives to the matter honest consideration must be convinced that in almost every case the so-called necessity grows out of a desire for pleasure or for gain which makes those who are ruled by it unwilling to give the Lord one seventh of the time. Few indeed are the cases in which the plea of necessity is not a lie. It is better to use plain language on this subject, for many good, conscientious people who would like to see the Lord's day properly observed are deceived by this specious plea. So many and great are the violations

of the Sabbath which are excused or justified by false claims of necessity, and so far-reaching and pernicious is their influence, that we must consider the matter somewhat in detail.

The worst case of this kind is the *Sunday newspaper*. Nothing is better calculated to destroy the sanctity and restfulness of the Sabbath than the publication of these papers, and they are entirely without excuse. The plea that they are necessary is not worthy of serious consideration, and few newspaper proprietors have the hardihood to make it. The most that they can say is that the public "demand" Sunday newspapers. This is only half true; and even if it were wholly true it would not justify their publication. Because there is a "public" that wants obscene literature it does not follow that the publication and sale of obscene literature should be tolerated. The same argument applies to the Sunday newspaper. The simple and obvious fact is that the only reason for publishing Sunday newspapers is to make money. There is no necessity in the case. But it may be asked, What are the objections to the Sunday newspapers? There are many and serious objections to them, only a few of which can be here presented.

The first objection is that they deprive thousands of persons of their Sabbath by compelling



them to work seven days in a week. This work extends far beyond the offices from which the papers are issued. It includes editors, reporters, type-setters, pressmen, mailing-agents, carriers, newsdealers, newsboys and many others. It does not meet the case at all to say that in the offices of many seven-day papers the men are allowed one day a week for rest, for they are only a small part of those who are compelled to work on Sunday. The plea is commonly put forth that it is not the Sunday, but the Monday morning, paper which necessitates Sunday work. This is not true. If no paper were issued on Sunday, Saturday would be free for work on the Monday paper, and most of the work for it could be done before ten o'clock Saturday night. What remained could be done after ten o'clock Sunday night. Thus the whole twenty-four hours of the Lord's day could be free from work, and the privilege of attending church would be undisturbed. Newspaper-men themselves admit\* that this is the case, and thus out of their own mouths are they condemned.

A second and more serious objection to Sunday

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\* See the *New York Tribune*, November 15, 1871, the *Chicago Daily News*, August 12, 1884, and an address by J. L. Perry, of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, published in the *International Sabbath Association Reporter*, No. 4, May, 1882. Others might be cited.

newspapers is that, in substance and in spirit, they are directly antagonistic to the right observance of the Lord's day. The mere fact that they are published and scattered over the country tends to obliterate the distinction which ought to be maintained between Sunday and other days. Instead of directing the minds of their readers away from those things with which they have been occupied during the week, Sunday newspapers force upon their attention the same class of subjects. Thus they violate the sanctity of the day, and prevent minds already jaded with worldly affairs from gaining necessary change and rest. The reading of them unfits the mind for any religious exercises, and in many cases occupies the time which ought to be spent at church.

Another serious objection lies against Sunday newspapers on account of their contents. The statement, which is often made in their defence, that they contain a vast amount of religious reading, will appear absurd and ridiculous to any one who examines their contents. Some of the vilest sheets published in this country are Sunday newspapers. Are the Sunday issues of the great dailies morally better than their ordinary issues? Every one knows that the newspaper reflects, not the best but the worst side of human life. Murders, suicides, robberies, thefts, rapes, adul-

teries, elopements, divorces, drunken rows, family quarrels, scandals, frauds, embezzlements, accidents, fires, theatres, horse-races, and other subjects of the same kind, expatiated upon at great length and described with the most fervid rhetoric, constitute the staple of these papers. The weekly Sunday papers usually contain sensational stories of the worst character. And this is the kind of reading with which men are asked to quicken their devotion on Sunday!

After the best has been said for them, it still remains true that Sunday newspapers are unmitigated evils. Those who publish them, those who sell them, those who advertise in them, and those who buy and read them, are all guilty of violating the Sabbath.

Another serious and destructive violation of the Sabbath is that occasioned by the running of *Sunday trains* on our railroads. This is an evil second only to that of the Sunday newspaper; in some respects it is a greater evil. Here too a vast number of men, not less than two hundred and fifty thousand in this country alone, are deprived of their Sabbath rest. But the worst of it is that their moral sense is broken down. Men who have charge of vast interests and property worth countless millions are taught to violate the moral law. Most of the railroads and newspapers

of our land are putting a premium on Sabbath-breaking, and are practically announcing that they do not want Christians in their employ. The movement of trains from town to town on Sunday destroys the quiet of the day, and creates the impression on the minds of the people that the Sabbath is obliterated. The running of Sunday trains encourages and promotes Sunday travel and Sunday excursions, and thus tends directly to the destruction of the Sabbath among the people.

The cause of this evil is justified on the plea of necessity. It is claimed that not only do the public demand Sunday passenger trains, but that great and irreparable loss would be occasioned by stopping freight trains on Sunday. Prominent railroad men have admitted\* that the plea of necessity is not well founded. President Samuel Sloan, of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, says, "In my judgment the *necessity* so much urged does *not* exist, nor do the public demand from railroad management more than ordinary labor." They all admit that the running of Sunday trains is largely the result of competition, and that if the managers of the different roads would come to an agreement on the subject the amount of Sunday traffic might be largely

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\* See the pamphlet entitled "Sunday Railway Work" for a statement of their opinions in full.

diminished. The cases of *necessary* Sunday travel are very few, certainly not enough to justify the running of trains. It is claimed that if through trains which require more than twenty-four hours to complete their trips should lie over all day Sunday, passengers would be subjected to loss of time and heavy expenses. People lose a day from worldly occupations wherever they keep Sunday, and this plea only shows that those who make it want to rob the Lord of his day. As to the matter of expense, few would need to incur it, for they would not be obliged to start upon a journey which they could not complete before Sunday morning.

It may be that a few trains carrying perishable freight would have to be run on Sunday, but they would be very few. Ordinarily there is no necessity for shipping such freight so late in the week that it cannot reach its destination before Saturday night. The fact is, if the managers of railroads, and the people who patronize the roads, were minded to observe the Lord's day, there would be no real difficulty in the case. It might occasion at times some inconvenience, but *convenience* is not necessity. That Sunday trains are not necessary to the prosperity of a railroad is proved by the case of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western. Under the influence of the late Will-

iam E. Dodge and President Sloan, it has always refused to run Sunday trains, but from the beginning of its history it has been one of the most prosperous roads in the country. When, in 1873, the Central Railroad of New Jersey decided to run Sunday trains, Mr. Dodge retired from its management and sold out his stock, getting a high premium. In less than two years the road was bankrupt, its stock selling for ten cents on a dollar. We do not claim that this bankruptcy was a penalty for Sabbath-breaking, but it shows that Sunday trains do not make a road prosperous.

We do not see how a Christian man can consistently own stock in a railroad that runs unnecessary trains on Sunday, or take any part in its management, or act as one of its employes. Some good men do it, but it would be better for their souls and better for the world if they refused. The fact is, such a refusal unanimously made by Christians would put a complete stop to Sunday railroad traffic. We need more courage and consistency in this matter. One of the most shameless things connected with the running of Sunday trains is that the managers and patrons of camp-meetings sometimes ask for them. No Christian man ought ever to be seen in a railway car on Sunday. This may seem like a stringent rule; but this gigantic evil will never be sup-



pressed so long as professed Christians encourage its continuance by their patronage.\*

Another form of Sunday work for which a false plea of necessity is made is that occasioned by the *Sunday mails*. In this country they compel not less than one hundred and fifty thousand persons to lose the whole or a part of their Sunday rest. They disturb the rest of hundreds of thousands more by keeping up the steady flow of business and mental activity directed to secular ends, among those who write and receive letters on Sunday. For this work there is really as little necessity as there is for Sunday newspapers or Sunday trains. If not a letter were posted, carried or delivered on Sunday, no interest of the country would suffer. Practical and conclusive proof of this is found in the fact that in London, England, the great business centre of the world, letters are not gathered or delivered on Sunday; and in Toronto, Canada, there is a total cessation of post-office business without sensible inconvenience to any one. It is sometimes urged that in cases of sickness or in business crises it is important that letters should go as quickly as possible. But in such cases the telegraph can be used on Saturday or Monday, and the message reach its

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\* See Appendix E.

destination more quickly than a letter would, even if it were carried and delivered on Sunday. Since there is no real necessity in the case, the government ought to abolish the Sunday mails. It has no right to force its employes to work on Sunday. It has no right to allow the force of its example to act against the observance of the Lord's day, and so against the Christian religion. But the people also have a duty in the matter. They ought not to make use of the Sunday mails nor go to the post-office, but refuse to have their letters delivered on Sunday.

Much of the so-called necessary work of cities is really unnecessary. This is shown by the fact that in Toronto there is an almost total cessation of all kinds of work without inconvenience to any one. It is claimed that the running of street-cars is a necessity ; but is this true ? Their only legitimate service on Sunday is to carry people to and from church. But how many people are really obliged to go to church in the horse-cars ? It will generally be found on inquiry that those who do use them for that purpose go directly by a church of their own faith, in order to reach a favorite church which is farther from their homes. How many families are there, even among the poor of the great cities, that could not store all necessary provisions over Sunday ? It is a little

easier and a little pleasanter to purchase on Sunday, but the maximum of ease and pleasure is not a necessity. If drugs must be procured on Sunday, why could they not be obtained only on a physician's prescription, and the drug-store opened only in answer to a bell? We have referred to those cases in which the plea of necessity is most strongly urged, and need not particularize further. The simple fact is, if ninety-nine hundredths of the Sunday labor and traffic in our cities should be stopped, people could soon adjust themselves to the new conditions, and would be in no respect the worse for the change. If every one really desired to obey the law of God and to see others obey it, these "necessities" for Sunday work would soon disappear. But the majority have not this desire, and they make our business and social arrangements. What shall the minority who would keep the Sabbath do? They are so bound to their neighbors that it is hard not to conform in some degree to their habits. The only rule that can be laid down for them is, to give the least possible support and countenance to Sunday work. In respect to particular cases the individual conscience must be the guide. It should be remembered that only works of necessity, not work for gain or for pleasure or to meet fictitious wants, are allowed by the law of God.

Persons who really desire to keep the Lord's day sacred are often puzzled to know whether work which they must do in order to retain the positions in which they earn a living for themselves and their families may not fairly be accounted necessary work. In thousands of cases the alternative is placed before employes to work on Sunday or to be thrown out of work altogether. When to be thrown out of work means to lose one's only visible means of support, the case is a hard one. What ought one to do in such a case? It is clear that a Christian ought never to accept a situation which he knows beforehand will involve Sunday work. But if he is already in the place and the work comes upon him, shall he give it up and take the chances of starvation? If he has a little Christian heroism and considerable faith, that is just what he will do. But if his strength is not equal to that, let no one condemn him. Perhaps he cannot see that it is not necessary for him to have bread, but that it is necessary for him to keep his integrity before God. However, he may be assured that if he obeys his conscience he will not suffer. Hundreds of inquiries have been made, and no case has ever yet been found in which one suffered permanent injury or loss because he refused to work on Sunday. Such a man may be subject to temporary incon-

venience, but the final result will be the betterment of his condition. Let every man who is thus tried be very sure that the work is really necessary before he engages in it.

2. *Our Saviour taught that work connected with the conduct of public worship and with attendance on it is allowable on the Sabbath.* In answer to the charge of the Pharisees, he asked, "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?"\* In modern churches the pastor must do his hardest day's work on the Sabbath. The sexton must work in order to have the house of God ready for the people. In many cases a certain amount of work must be done in getting to the place of worship. But all this is permitted, because without it the highest ends of the Sabbath could not be reached.

3. *Such rest and recreation as may be necessary to the preservation of health* are certainly allowable on the Lord's day. Here again we are upon ground over which it is difficult to make our way. But since the original idea of the Sabbath was rest, it cannot be wrong for us to use for that purpose all of it that may be needed. If one can best recruit his wasted energies by a little extra

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\* Matthew 12:5.

sleep on that day, let him take it. If one is shut up in a mill or a store or an office all the week, so that what he needs is a few hours in the open air, let him take a walk along a country road, if he can find one, or in the woods or in a park; only let him do it in an orderly and decent manner, trespassing upon no one's property and indulging in no rude and boisterous behavior. If he go alone, let him meditate on things appropriate to the day; or if he have company, let the conversation be of suitable matters. In some cases invalids and those not able to walk may have need of riding on the Lord's day. If they go only for health, and if no other day can be found for the purpose, they can go with a clear conscience. In all such cases, the only objection to be considered is the influence which one's action may have on the conduct of others or upon one's own reputation. If it is likely to be misinterpreted, he must judge for himself whether the benefit will counterbalance the evil.

Perhaps these hints with regard to what is allowable on the Lord's day are sufficient. As stated at the outset, definite and precise rules cannot be given. We must pass now to consider

### III. THINGS REQUIRED ON THE LORD'S DAY.—

There are positive duties connected with the observance of the Sabbath. As we discovered in studying



the nature of the institution, the day is not properly observed by one who spends it in idleness.

1. Among the first of these positive duties is that of *engaging in public worship*. Unless it is absolutely impossible, every person should spend a part of every Lord's day with the people of God in his sanctuary. No one who believes in the existence of God can question the duty of public worship. It is a duty which we owe to him as the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. Private worship is not enough, since we are under obligation to exalt his holy name before all his intelligent creatures. It is a duty which we owe to ourselves. It is a duty which we owe to others. All who are regular at the house of God exert a salutary influence upon the world by their example. They remind the ungodly of their religious duties, and indirectly preach the gospel of Christ every time they go to the place of public worship. We can do nothing better for the irreligious than to exert upon them such an influence. The more carefully one considers it, the more thoroughly he will become convinced that the duty of public worship is among the most important duties of every human being.

The only available time for this—the only time when the people of any community can unitedly engage in it—is the Lord's day, when

there is a cessation in the ordinary avocations of life. How much of the day shall be used for this purpose every person must determine for himself. Few are in danger of spending too much in this way, though occasionally that error is committed. Perhaps in ordinary cases, one half the hours of the Lord's day should be spent in public worship and in the study of God's word in the Bible-school. This is meant as a general average; circumstances will often compel wide deviations from it. When we speak of spending one half the hours of the Lord's day in public religious exercises, we must not be understood as advocating the "once-a-day" habit of church attendance, much less the habit pursued by the Roman Catholics, of giving the forenoon to religion and the afternoon to the pursuit of pleasure. But suppose the day to consist of fourteen hours, then seven of them might be profitably spent in religious meetings and in going to and from the house of God. This is about the time required to attend three services. Some, owing to feeble health or domestic duties, cannot attend so many. In some cases religious work of other kinds may present itself as a higher duty. These are among the circumstances which modify the application of a rule which we have simply suggested as a good general rule for healthy, unencumbered per-

sons. While here and there a misguided person desires to spend the whole day in religious assemblies, and is thus in danger of religious dissipation, the great majority are unwilling to spend one half the day in this manner. But one who has spent no part of it in public worship, and who has not been prevented by higher duties, may be sure that he has not properly observed the Lord's day.

2. Another thing which is required on the Lord's day is *religious work*. What form this shall take and how much of it shall be done must be determined by circumstances. Teaching in the Bible-school is religious work. Presenting to the unconverted the claims of Christ in personal conversation is religious work. Distributing Bibles or tracts is religious work. One very important duty appropriate to the Lord's day is that of giving religious instruction to the children of the household by the parents. As Sunday should be emphatically a family day, it will be appropriate in this connection to speak somewhat fully of the manner in which it should be observed in the family. This part of our subject is of transcendent importance. More depends upon how Sunday shall be used in the family than upon its use in any other relation. It is here that children are to get their ideas of its proper observance; it is here more than anywhere else that

the Sabbath as a religious and national institution is to be preserved. On the other hand, the Sabbath may be so great a blessing to the family that nothing should be allowed to interfere with its proper use. Every household should insist on having it for a family day, and should not allow the enjoyment of its privileges or the performance of its duties to be interfered with by visiting or any other disturbance.

In the family the difference between Sunday and other days should be made as marked as possible. All necessary preparation for the proper observance of the day, such as setting the house in order, getting the clothes ready and bathing, should be made on Saturday. No unnecessary work should be allowed in the household. So far as possible the atmosphere of the day should be religious. Pains ought to be taken to keep the conversation away from secular, worldly or frivolous topics. And yet the day should not be one of restraint and gloom, lest the children learn to hate it. It should be the brightest and gladdest day of the whole week.

It is an important and perplexing question to know what to do with the children on Sunday. If they are compelled to abstain from their ordinary play and work, and other means are not found to occupy their time, the day will be long

and wearisome to them, and they will be certain not to use it properly unless they are instructed and led by their parents. While the working out of the details must be left to the piety, good sense and ingenuity of parents, a few general suggestions may be given.

In the first place it ought to be the rule of every household that the children shall be taken to church and Sunday-school. It is not enough that they go to the school; attendance at church is far more important. They should go to both as soon as they are old enough to keep quiet, and by a little care they can be trained to do this at a very early age. Aside from the direct benefits of attending church, the habit thus formed is invaluable. Should they be compelled to go against their will? Certainly; it is no greater hardship to be compelled to go to church than it is to be compelled to wash their hands and faces and keep their clothes clean. But will not compulsory attendance at church make them hate religion? Does compelling them to be neat in childhood make them love dirt when they are grown up? The amount of current nonsense on this subject is astonishing. Of course the exercise of authority in the matter should be resorted to only when necessary, and should be loving and tender, not arbitrary and harsh. But when the habit of

church-going is once thoroughly formed, they will take it as a matter of course that they must go. And the best of it is that the habit will last them through life. As soon as the children are old enough to go out for any purpose in the evening, they should attend the evening as well as the morning service. But children under twelve or fourteen years of age cannot attend more than one church service. It is a good plan for parents to *take* their children to Sunday-school rather than to *send* them.

But attendance at religious services will occupy only a part of Sunday; how shall the children be employed during the rest of it? This question relates especially to the younger children, most of whose time must be spent at home. Some part of it should be occupied in giving them religious instruction. Let them be questioned with regard to the sermon they have heard and the lesson they have studied. Parents who have tried it are surprised to see how early their children become appreciative listeners at church, when they expect to be questioned about the sermon at home. Another good way to occupy the children on Sunday is to tell them Bible stories, or to read to them stories suitable to the day. They will listen eagerly to such stories long before they are able to read for themselves.



If there is any musical talent in the family, some time may be taken each Sabbath for a home-service of song, singing hymns and religious songs, in which all can join. This will be equally delightful to the older and the younger members of the family. But beyond this strictly religious use of the time, parents should talk with their children on Sunday about their every-day duties and interests, keeping in view the moral and religious side of them. It is the day above all others for the cultivation of family affection and the strengthening of the bonds between the different members of the family.

The question is often asked, Should children be permitted to play on Sunday? Surely it is not necessary except in the case of very young children. If such means as those we have suggested are employed, the day may be made a happy one without play. But if play is permitted at all, it should be of a different kind from that indulged in on week-days. Plenty of religious games, such as "Noah's Ark" and "Pilgrim's Progress," have been invented for young children, and these should be provided and reserved for that day. As early as possible every child should learn that Sunday is a holy day and that it is not to be used for secular purposes.

The duty of giving religious instruction to the

children devolves upon the father. Of course, if he will not do it, the Christian mother must carry this with all her other burdens; but if he is minded to do it, he will usually find that some portion of Sunday is almost the only time he can get for the purpose. On that day let him take from the mother, in part, the burden of caring for and teaching the children. If he is a wise father, he will be glad to do it. If he is an affectionate father, he can make the children so love the Lord's day that all their future lives will be filled with bright memories of it. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with such a use of the day. While it is primarily a day of religion, to a much larger extent than is usual at the present time Sunday ought to be made a family day—a day when the members of the family, scattered during the week by their various occupations, shall be brought together as much as possible.

3. Other duties appropriate to the Lord's day are *works of mercy*. As already stated, such works should not be confined to that day, but they are peculiarly appropriate to it. The example of our Saviour suggests this. He frequently brought himself into conflict with the Pharisees by healing the sick on the Sabbath. The very nature of Christ's religion would exalt this duty. To the Jews who condemned him Jesus said,

“But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.”\* In answer to a question, he said, “It is lawful to do well”—that is, to do good works—“on the sabbath days.”† We ought to need no other incentive than the example of our Lord to do such work on the day that is peculiarly his. Visiting the sick and the afflicted, caring for the destitute and investigating cases of reported need are works suited to the Lord’s day. It may be suggested, however, that if time and opportunity can be found on other days, Sunday might better be reserved for purely religious work. But these works are required on that day if no other time can be found for them.

4. Some portion of every Lord’s day should be reserved for *religious reading and meditation*. Those who are engaged in manual labor and in business ought to do a large amount of reading on Sunday. It is their best opportunity for the improvement of mind and heart by this means. Persons whose labor is largely manual can thus rest their bodies while they improve their minds. In families one member can read aloud for the edification of all. In this way the fruits of reading would be gathered, and at the same time the

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\* Matthew 12 : 7.

† *Ibid.*, 12 : 12.

family life would be cultivated. Students and others engaged in intellectual toil will not wish to read much on Sunday; and if they are wise, what reading they do will be devotional. What such persons especially need is religious exercises, social intercourse and out-door rest.

Some portion of every Sunday ought to be spent in self-examination, in meditation upon religious truth and in communion with God. No doubt these are duties for every day, but ordinarily more time can be obtained for them on Sundays than on other days. In the hurry, the confusion and the eager striving of modern times, our religious life suffers sadly for the want of these exercises. This is especially true of people who live in cities. The calls upon their attention are so many and so loud that they can scarcely get a moment to think of how they are living. All the greater is the need of reserving some portion of Sunday for this purpose. Since we have little hope of this blessed experience on other days, we ought certainly to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." How little do they know of their real needs—of the demands of their higher nature—who are willing to spend the precious hours of this day in pleasure-seeking!

We have thus indicated the improper and the proper methods of spending the Lord's day. We

have tried to deal with general principles, yet a certain amount of specialization has seemed necessary; but the application of the principles in detail must be left to the individual judgment and conscience. It may be thought that, among the "things allowable" and the "things required," we have suggested too many things to be done on this day. It is not expected, of course, that special attention will be given to *all* of these things on every Sunday. Each person must divide his time and attention as he thinks best in his peculiar circumstances. Some attention should be given to each of the "things required," but how much it is impossible to define. We feel certain that those who spend the Lord's day according to the principles we have here laid down and illustrated will soon be led to regard a weekly Sabbath among the choicest blessings which a kind heavenly Father has bestowed upon a needy race.

## CHAPTER XV.

### OUR OBLIGATIONS RESPECTING THE LORD'S DAY.

My son, forget not my law ; but let thine heart keep my commandments : for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.—PROV. 3 : 1, 2.

At this point in the discussion we are prepared to state clearly and fully what we mean by the Lord's day. It is not precisely the same thing as the Jewish Sabbath, though it is closely akin to that institution. We do not assert that anything distinctively Jewish is to be perpetuated. Just so far as the Sabbath took its form and coloring from Judaism, it has been changed. The Lord's day bears about the same relation to the Jewish Sabbath that a son who has enjoyed every opportunity for culture bears to his less-cultivated but equally good and noble father. He has inherited many traits—for the fundamentals of his character he is indebted to his father ; but he has gone far beyond him in mental growth and attainments, and so is a more complete man. Although we have argued that the fourth commandment is still in force, it does not follow that we would have the Jewish Sabbath, in all its features, per-



petuated. We emphatically disavow any inclination to join the Judaizers. We claim simply that the Sabbath as an institution is perpetual, that it existed before and survives the Jewish Sabbath, and that it appears in its most perfect form in the Lord's day. The original Sabbath lost nothing from its Jewish modifications; rather it gained in clearness of outline, in fullness of meaning and in value to man. There have really been three stages of development. There was first the original Sabbath, whose nature and uses were imperfectly understood, and which was little regarded by men; then came the Jewish Sabbath, holding an important relation to their religious system, and playing a large part in the religious education of man; and, last of all, the Lord's day, with its richer associations, its greater spirituality, its demand for higher duties, its offer of nobler privileges, and its more distinct promise of perfect rest in the future. Just as the present is the heir of all past ages, so our Sabbath is the heir of Sabbaths that have gone before.

Thus the Lord's day rests upon the unrepealed law of God given at the beginning and re-enacted on Sinai, and yet is an advance upon what was then given. It is not the original Sabbath. It is not the Jewish Sabbath. It is not simply a memorial of our Lord's resurrection, established

by the apostles and sanctioned by the Church in every age of the Christian era. It is all of these and even more. It is more than all of these because Christ gave it a peculiarly Christian character in making it a day of rest from secular toil, and yet a day crowded with beneficent deeds. It gathers into itself all that was worth preserving of the Jewish Sabbath, and takes on added value and glory from the teaching of Christ and from Christian associations.

Now, what shall we do with this institution? What are our duties respecting it? It ought now to be plain that it is more important to-day than it ever was in the past. The Lord's day is certainly more to us than their Sabbath was to the Hebrews. This is just as vitally related to the Christian religion as that was to Judaism. If the Sabbath was of any value to the Jew intellectually and physically, the Lord's day is of equal value to us. The question presses itself home to every man's judgment and conscience, Shall we neglect this institution and suffer it to perish, or shall we carefully maintain it? We can easily do the former, for God will not compel us by force to observe the Lord's day. But before we adopt that course we ought to make very sure that we are not helping to destroy an institution which will carry with it the best hopes of

humanity. Men are not very wise who break down a bridge which they must cross or drown. When Samson pulled down the Philistine temple upon his own head, he had the excuse that he could slay at the same time thousands of his enemies; but what shall we say of a man who, in a moment of impatience, pulls down his own house upon himself and his family? Can any honest and intelligent man satisfy himself that the weekly Sabbath is a worthless or pernicious institution? Of course, if he can, there is an end of the discussion, and he is excusable in neglecting it, and he ought to use his utmost endeavors to induce others to do the same. In the light of what we now have before us, can any one convince himself that the Sabbath is not commanded in the law of God? Suppose a man is really anxious to obey that law and sets it above the sentiments of men and the dictates of self-interest. Let this man carefully examine the teaching of God's word on the Sabbath, as it has been presented in these pages. Would his conclusion be that God did not command him to keep the Lord's day, but gave him liberty entirely to disregard it? It is hardly conceivable that an honest man could reach that conclusion; and yet one ought to reach it, before he decides that he has no duty with regard to the Lord's day. If

he believes that it is God's will for him to keep it and will not, he is a rebel against God.

We believe that it is the duty of all men to keep holy the Lord's day, and to do everything in their power to induce others to keep it holy. This surely is the necessary conclusion of the arguments which have been presented for its divine origin and perpetual obligation. This duty will be more apparent if we consider its different relations.

I. It is a duty which we owe to God. There are three reasons for this: (1) He has commanded it, and has never revoked the order. The first claim which he makes upon every creature is that of obedience. The very essence of sin is rebellion against his authority. According to the terse but comprehensive definition of John, "sin is the transgression of the law."\* Nothing that we can do is acceptable to him so long as we have the spirit of disobedience in our hearts. It is easy to understand why this must be so. All God's laws are founded in right, and are but expressions of the divine nature. He is rightfully supreme in authority, for he is infinite in all excellences. As Creator, Preserver and Redeemer he has the first claim upon our allegi-

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\* 1 John 3 : 4.

ance. He desires our love; our primary duty is to love him with all the heart, mind and strength. But love that does not bring our wills into conformity to his means nothing. Hence, one who willfully disobeys a known command of God violates the first duty which is laid upon the heart and conscience of every man. Those who neglect the Lord's day are thus guilty.

(2) It is a duty which we owe to God as our Redeemer. By the wonderful love which Christ has shown for us on the cross, he constrains us to keep holy the Lord's day, and to induce others to honor it. Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service;*"\* as though when every other appeal failed they would be moved by the thought of Christ's dying love. Let us remember that the Lord's day is kept in honor of him who gave his life for us, and who rose again from the grave to intercede for us at the right hand of God. He who violates the Christian Sabbath asserts by his action that he cares nothing for Christ; that he is so hardened by sin that incarnate love cannot touch his heart; that he is so imbruted by indulgence of his car-

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\* Romans 12 : 1.

nal appetites that the noblest life and most heroic and self-sacrificing death the world ever saw awaken no thrill of admiration in his heart. Put it on this ground alone, admit that there is no other reason for observing the Lord's day than that it honors our crucified and risen Lord, and every man of conscience and sensibility ought to be more than willing to keep it in the manner that would best please him whose name it bears.

(3) It is a duty which must be done in order to prepare the way for the performance of other duties. It is our duty to learn of God's will concerning us through the study of his written word. If Jesus were on earth now in bodily form, he could say to many people, as he said to the Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."\* A fruitful source of error in all Christian lands is ignorance of God's word on the part of the masses of the people. It is also our duty to worship God. He is worthy of all reverence, adoration and praise. In the Scriptures no duty is made more prominent than that of worship. "Give unto the Lord the glory *due unto* his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."†

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\* Matthew 22 : 29.

† Psalm 96 : 8, 9.



This worship must be public\* as well as private ; that is, the people of every community are bound to assemble together and join with one another in the public worship of God. This is a duty which we all owe to him. But it has already been shown that neither this duty nor that of receiving instruction from the Scriptures can be satisfactorily performed without the observance of the Lord's day. Indeed, these exercises constitute the most essential element of such an observance. The most important reason for ordaining the Sabbath was that we might have opportunity to perform these duties. To neglect the Lord's day means a practical repudiation of God's claim to worship. Even private worship would soon be discontinued if we no longer had the services of the Lord's day to nourish our religious life. The people who are the most diligent in the study of God's word, and who engage most in secret prayer, are not the people who disregard his holy day. Thus the proper observance of the Sabbath is a prerequisite to the performance of most of the duties which we owe directly to God. It is hardly conceivable that one could be a willful violator of the Sabbath without becoming thoroughly godless. Those who think that this in-

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\* Psalm 40 ; 89 : 7 ; Hebrews 10 : 25.

stitution is of little account should ask themselves whether they are prepared to see the world given over to practical atheism. Thus, because God has commanded it, because it honors his Son who died to redeem us from sin and eternal death, and because it is a necessary condition of the performance of the most important duties that are laid upon the conscience of man, the observance of the Lord's day is a duty which we owe to God.

II. It is a duty which we owe to our fellow men. Here our duty is twofold. We are bound to observe the day on account of our example, and we are bound to do all we can consistent with due regard for their personal rights to induce others to observe it. Our duty respecting the Lord's day compels us to consider the effect of our conduct upon others. No man can say, "It concerns no one but myself whether I keep this day or not." He cannot limit to himself the effects of violating its sanctity. He may feel that he does not need it, but he cannot shape his course by that alone. He must consider whether the general disregard of the day would promote the welfare of the community in which he lives, and remember that his influence tends to destroy or maintain the institution.

In the first part of this book it was shown that

the Sabbath was necessary to the physical, mental, moral, religious and social welfare of man. It is, therefore, obvious that the maintenance of it is a duty which we owe to our fellow men. To take it away from them would be to degrade a large portion of the race to the position of slaves. Compelled to toil every day in the year, they would soon become physically enervated, mentally stupid and morally depraved. That is the condition of the common people in those lands where no Sabbath is known. There can be no doubt that the avarice and ambition of the wealthy and powerful would soon reduce to the same condition that great majority of the people in our own land who are compelled to gain a livelihood by manual toil, or by acting as employes, if we had no Sabbath. A small measure of philanthropy would impel us to give them one day in seven for physical rest. The slightest regard for their mutual improvement would make us glad to give them such an opportunity for receiving instruction as the proper observance of the Lord's day affords. If we have any interest whatever in their moral elevation, we shall keep the Lord's day as a religious festival, encouraging neither its use for secular toil nor its employment in riotous and injurious amusements. Good and wise men doubt whether the growing tendency to adopt the

latter use of the day does not render it advisable to abolish it altogether as a day of rest, and make it a working day like the others. Used in such a manner it does men no good physically, and tends to degrade them morally. It is quite certain that no one who has at heart the moral improvement of his fellow men would encourage such a use of the Lord's day. We are bound to consider also the religious welfare of man. There are many who are unwilling to take account of this. They think only of what will benefit the minds and bodies of men, and care nothing for their religious nature. They are willing to give laboring men an occasional day of rest for the sake of their bodies, but do not believe that any part of it should be spent in religious exercises. But we have shown that the religious nature is an essential part of a complete man. It is only by ignoring the fundamental laws of our being that we can deny the necessity of religion to a perfect manhood. If man were for this world alone, he would, perhaps, need no days devoted to religious uses. But we are not yet quite prepared to admit that we shall die as the brutes die. The materialistic and utilitarian tendencies of our age have not destroyed in all of us the belief in a future life. When men act as though they had no consideration for the religious nature or for the

claims of God, they degrade themselves to a low and brutish plane of living. Says Emerson, writing on immortality, "I admit that you will find a good deal of skepticism in the streets and hotels and places of coarse amusement; but that is only to say that the practical faculties are developed faster than the spiritual. Where there is depravity there is a slaughter-house style of thinking." This style of thinking nowhere manifests itself in so gross and repulsive form as in the expressions of those who think that man has no need of the Sabbath for religious purposes, because he has no religious nature and no hope of a future life. We owe it to our fellow men as immortal beings to make a religious use of the Lord's day, and by every means in our power to promote such a use of it among others. The highest love we can show for men is that which seeks to prepare them for a glorious life of righteousness in this world, and for a glorious immortality in the life to come.

On account of its relation to the general welfare of man, we hold that he is an enemy to his race who would rob them of the glorious privileges which are theirs through the observance of the Lord's day. It is to be expected that wicked men will sell rum, and adulterate food, and oppress the poor, and commit fraud, and do other nefarious

things for the sake of gain, or debauch the innocent to gratify their lusts, or cause the slaughter of thousands, or rob a nation of its liberty to feed their ambition; but what conceivable motive could induce men to rob mankind of a blessing so vitally related to their temporal and eternal welfare as the weekly Sabbath, unless it is a desire to put God out of the world, not caring how far they sink the race if only their consciences can be made easy while they trample on the laws of their Maker? We feel certain that all good men, when they come to think of the value of the Sabbath, will do everything in their power to preserve its sanctity. One who loves his kind must do this. If the self-seeking and greed and push of our times have left any philanthropy in our bosoms, if the hurry and confusion and turmoil of our life have left us any opportunity for patient thought upon our duties to our fellow men, if the force of the loving Saviour's influence is not altogether spent, there are many in Christian lands whose example and words will be given to preserve this sacred day from profanation. We believe that there are thousands who need only to know their duty in order to do it.

III. To keep the Lord's day holy is a duty which we owe to ourselves. This point is closely related to both the preceding. Our prosperity



and happiness depend upon our obedience to the laws of God. No one can doubt this but the atheist, the man who puts God out of the universe. If this world had a Creator, if he has made laws for its government, if he is immanent in nature and controls all things by his providences, if he has established moral laws by which the conduct of all intelligent creatures should be regulated, the line of obedience in these laws is the path which leads to the highest blessedness and the noblest destiny. They who transgress his laws must suffer harm. The universe is so organized that all its forces marshal themselves for the destruction of him who puts himself out of harmony with it. It is so in the material world. Transgress a law of your physical being, and you must pay the penalty in disease and pain. Put yourself in the fire or under water, and God will not stop the operation of his laws to save your life. As well might an insect alight upon the iron rail of the track and expect the train to stop in order that its life might be saved, as for you to expect that God will interfere with his laws to save one who violates them. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

It is so in the mental world. The mind has its recognized laws of development and activity. It is so in the moral world. He who transgresses

moral law inevitably becomes debased. "The wages of sin is death." The doing of one good deed gives us the power and disposition to do another. We are the children of our past deeds. Moreover, God has indissolubly linked together virtue and happiness, and vice and misery. The union is not arbitrary, but grows out of the nature of things. It is only when we remember this that we can understand the threatenings and promises of Scripture. "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them."\* "But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken *it*."† "The face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."‡ "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."§ "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."|| This applies to all the commands of God. It is reasonable to suppose that God knew what was good for us when he commanded us to keep a weekly Sabbath. He could no more make a mistake in this than in

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\* Leviticus 18 : 5.

‡ Matthew 19 : 17.

† Isaiah 1 : 20.

|| Revelation 22 : 14.

‡ Psalm 34 : 16.

establishing other laws. This requirement is in strict accordance with man's physical, mental and moral being. We have seen in a previous chapter how important God made it for the Hebrews, and how closely he connected the observance of it with their welfare. There is no reason for thinking that it is less important to us, or that the advantages of observing it and the disadvantages of violating it have been changed. We cannot expect to transgress the law of God and escape its penalty. It is just as true now as it ever was that the way of prosperity and blessedness is the way of obedience. He who neglects the Lord's day will certainly suffer loss. If he does not experience calamity in this world, he will be one of those who, in the world to come, will be cast into outer darkness. He who keeps the Lord's day, using it in the way that seems to him best adapted to promote his own spiritual welfare and to advance the cause of Christ, will be blessed in the doing of it, and will be prepared for eternal glory in the future world.

IV. To keep holy the Lord's day is a duty which we owe to our families. He who undertakes to train his children without teaching them to observe this day assumes a fearful responsibility. The children will grow up in godlessness, and may reasonably be expected to become

vicious. One is sometimes careless of his own welfare, when he is not willing to drag his children down with him. If no other motive induces one to "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," the knowledge of its value to his children ought to be sufficient.

V. It is a duty which we owe to our country. While we are bound to be interested in the welfare of all mankind, our own country has the first claim upon us. Christian philanthropy is not limited by national boundaries; but even the apostles were to begin at Jerusalem in preaching the gospel to all the world. Paul had a special desire for the salvation of his own countrymen, his "kinsmen according to the flesh." Patriotism is one of the primary virtues. It is an essential quality of a noble character. Mean and base indeed is he who does not care for his country's welfare. Do we not instinctively feel, when the poet says,

"I do love  
My country's good with a respect more tender,  
More holy and profound, than mine own life,"

that he expresses a noble sentiment? But when we consider how great is our country, and how largely the hopes of humanity depend upon its destiny, we may well consider the effect of our actions upon its welfare. Longfellow is not guilty

of excessive exaggeration when he says to our Union,

“ Humanity with all its fears,  
With all the hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate.”

It can easily be shown that the attitude of our people toward the Lord's day will be an important factor in determining the future of this country. But before speaking of that, we must give our attention to another yet closely-related subject. One of the burning questions of the day is that concerning the Sunday laws. It is the law of the land that no business shall be transacted on Sunday. Courts of justice and all public offices are closed. A contract made on that day is not binding. Men employed by the month or year cannot be compelled to work on that day. A debt cannot be collected on Sunday. Most, if not all, of the states of the Union have laws prohibiting work, business and certain kinds of amusements on the Christian Sabbath, and some of the cities have special laws prohibiting the opening of stores, liquor-saloons and places of amusement.\* Of late these laws have not been very strictly enforced, and there is a demand for their repeal. Infidels, free-thinkers and all

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\* See Appendix D for abstract of the Sunday laws of the United States.

who are hostile or indifferent to the Christian religion claim that to enact and enforce such laws is an infringement of their personal rights. They would have all kinds of business, both public and private, transacted on Sunday as on other days; and they insist that each citizen should be allowed to use the day as he pleases—for work or amusement or worship. Any effort on the part of the government to restrain them they scoff at as an attempt to “make them religious by law.” They denounce it as an effort to control their consciences, and as inconsistent with our notions of religious liberty. At the first glance the complaint seems to be well founded; but before we can decide the question upon its merits, we must understand what the Sunday laws are designed to accomplish. It is not their purpose to compel men to accept the Christian religion against their will. Every true Christian knows perfectly well that such an attempt would be of no use whatever. It is a libel upon Christians to imply that they do not, in our times at least, understand the nature of their own religion better than to suppose that men can be made Christians by force. Neither are the Sunday laws intended to compel any one to observe the Lord's day according to a prescribed method. When the Puritans of the New England colonies



forced every person to attend church who was able to go, they were guilty of religious intolerance and persecution. Nothing of the kind is contemplated in the passage of Sunday laws. They simply prohibit the doing of certain things which it is felt are calculated to destroy the sanctity of the Lord's day as a public institution. There are two reasons for the passage and enforcement of such laws. The first is the belief of the great majority of our people that the observance of the Lord's day is essential to the welfare of the nation. They would regard the general neglect and desecration of this day as a great public calamity. They know that if any considerable portion of the population is allowed freely to desecrate it, the tendency will be toward its complete destruction. Familiarity with any practice, however repulsive it may be at first, soon renders it tolerable, and, where it is an irreligious practice, may even make it pleasant. The example of others is contagious, especially the example of those who do evil. Children will soon lose their respect for the sanctity of the day which is filled with secular toil or worldly pleasure; and if the growing desecration of the Lord's day is not checked, the present generation will hardly be in their graves before we shall be a nation without a Sabbath. The second reason is

that most of those who desire to keep the Lord's day holy cannot do so while others are disregarding it. A farmer could, for he is isolated from his fellows, and it makes comparatively little difference to him whether his neighbors work on Sunday or not. But it is not so with those who live in towns, and are more closely associated with one another. There, if business should go on as usual, the quiet which is essential to the proper enjoyment of the Lord's day is destroyed. Large classes are so associated in work that some cannot rest unless all do. If the courts were in session on Sunday, Christian lawyers would have to be there to attend to their cases, or suffer great loss. If the factory runs on Sunday, all the hands must be present or take the risk of being dismissed. When his train leaves the station on Sunday, the Christian engineer or brakeman must go with it. If groceryman A opens his store on Sunday morning, groceryman B must also open his store or lose all those customers who like to be accommodated on Sunday. He may stand out against it for a while, but unless he is a very conscientious Christian he will finally yield. If he stands by his convictions, he naturally feels that he has suffered a wrong against which the law ought to protect him. It is so with many other callings. Very few can have their Sunday

and properly observe it, unless there is a general cessation of the ordinary week-day business. The principal purpose of the Sunday laws is to protect Christians and those who agree with them in their right to keep the Lord's day as their consciences require them to observe it.

Let us look for a moment at these two reasons and see whether they are sufficient to justify the passage and enforcement of Sunday laws. It will hardly be disputed that a government should prohibit that which it believes to be detrimental to the public good. In a government by the people the majority must rule. What *they* believe to be for the general good must be submitted to by the minority, unless the latter feel certain that it is contrary to the law of God. In that case it may be their duty to resist; but they cannot justify resistance to the will of the majority on the ground that obedience to it is not convenient. A nation is not made up of a number of isolated persons. It is not a heap of sand, each grain of which exists only for itself. A nation is an organized body, every member of which is dependent upon every other. It is formed and exists on the supposition that each citizen will surrender a portion of his absolute rights in exchange for the advantages of citizenship. It is absurd for people to talk of their abstract rights, as though

there were no other persons in the world. When men become citizens of a country like ours, it is with the tacit understanding that the majority shall rule. The majority of the people in this country believe that the sale of intoxicants should be regulated by law. Have those who believe that its sale should be unrestricted any right to complain? When a majority of our citizens believe that it ought to be prohibited altogether, it will be done, and the minority must submit. There is a small minority in this country who think they should be allowed to deal in obscene literature. May not a man sell what he pleases to those who wish to buy? But the majority say that they shall not sell such books and papers as are calculated to injure the morals of the young.

There is another small minority who believe that they should be allowed to practice polygamy. May not a man have as many wives as he can get and support? That seems like a matter which concerns only himself and the women he marries. Nevertheless the majority believe that the practice of polygamy is dangerous to the welfare of society, and the government voices the opinion of the majority. Precisely the same principle applies to the Sunday laws. So long as a majority of the people believe that the observance of the Sabbath is for the public good,

it is their undoubted right to compel every one to abstain from conduct calculated to destroy it. In this country there can be no question on which side the majority stands. It can be shown by statistics that at least three-fourths of our people are in favor of the observance of Sunday as a day of rest and religious service.\* There is no truth whatever in the claim that it is only a Puritanical minority who are pleased with the Sunday laws.

The plea is sometimes advanced that such laws are inconsistent with personal liberty. They do not interfere with liberty, but only with license. When a man asks for the privilege of doing that which will be injurious to other men or to society, he is asking for license, not for liberty. Sunday laws are no more infractions of personal liberty than many other laws—than the laws which relate to the preservation of health, to the education of the masses, to the prevention of crime, to the preservation of the home, and others of the same kind. Two instances will show the absurdity of the plea. May not a man do what he pleases on his own premises? But suppose he tries to keep a nuisance, or something which endangers the health of his neighbors. At once

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\* See "The Sabbath for Man," pp. 83-90.

the law steps in to prevent him, and it does him no good to cry out that his personal liberty is violated. May not a man use as he pleases an animal which he has bought with his own money? But if he starve his horse or beat it unmercifully, the law places its restraining hand upon him, and tells him to desist. Even dumb brutes are thus protected from brutes that are not dumb. It will be seen at once that every law which is framed for the protection and benefit of society must interfere with the individual when he undertakes to do that which is injurious to society. It is on this principle that men may justly and properly be told what they may and may not do on the Lord's day. So long as society believes that to destroy the Sabbath would be injurious to itself, it has a perfect right to inflict any penalty it pleases upon the man whose conduct is calculated to impair its sanctity.

Again, it is pertinent to ask whether those who desire to keep the Lord's day shall be protected in their right to observe it, or whether those who desire to make it a day of pleasure or business shall be protected in violating it. The rights of one class should be as sacred as those of another. Suppose the two parties to be equal in number; the question would then turn upon which would suffer the greater wrong in granting the other his



desire. In one case men would simply be restrained from that which would gratify their worldly ambition or their love of pleasure ; in the other case they would be compelled to do violence to their consciences or to suffer loss. It certainly cannot be a matter of conscience for a man so to occupy himself on the Lord's day as to make it impossible for his neighbor to keep it holy. It is a matter of conscience and of religious conviction with thousands to observe the day as the Christian Sabbath. But the parties are by no means equal, and the question really is whether a godless minority shall be allowed to trample upon the rights of the majority. It should not take long to decide such a question.

But the cry is raised that the government should have nothing to do with religion, and the Sunday laws are the result of legislation on religious matters. Here a half-truth is so pushed into the foreground that the other half is hidden. It is true that governments have no right to make laws favoring one religion or one sect at the expense of another. For example, if the government should tax all our citizens for the support of some particular form of Christianity, those who do not accept that form would have just cause of complaint. The government has no right to prescribe forms of worship, to subject

any person to political or civil disabilities on account of his religious belief, or in any way to coerce the consciences of men. At the same time no government can entirely ignore religion. A nation is made up of men, and men are religious beings. It would be just as sensible for a government to make its laws regardless of the fact that men have bodies whose health must be preserved by observing the principles of sanitation, as for it to ignore the religious nature of man. In constituting a nation and in framing a government men act as religious beings, and their religion must mark their national institutions. Now, in the sense that it is not a Mohammedan or a Buddhist or a Roman Catholic nation, this is a Christian and Protestant nation. Protestant Christianity was the accepted religion of most of those who settled this country, who organized the nation and framed its laws. It was natural and even necessary that that form of religion should be considered, and, since the observance of the Lord's day was an essential part of it, that provision should be made to allow all who chose to do so, to observe it without disturbance. The nation has so far retained that character, and those who have come hither from other lands have generally been aware of it; if they have not, they could easily have informed themselves; and

it is preposterous for them to come here and ask us to change our institutions to suit their notions. A company of men and women form a society for certain purposes, and lay down such rules for its government as seem to them best. Suppose that one of these rules is that the meetings of the society should open with prayer. After a little, some atheist or infidel who wishes to join the society asks them to omit this ceremony in order not to hurt his feelings. What would be their answer? If they had any self-respect they would say to him, "You can enter the society as it is and abide by its rules, or you can stay out." In the same way we have the right to say to foreigners who scoff at our Sunday laws, "You are not compelled to come to this country; but if you come, you must come among us as we are and adjust yourselves to our institutions. We certainly shall not adjust our institutions to your ideas and habits."

We conclude that our government has the right to make it impossible to do public business on the Lord's day, and that the state governments may justly pass laws requiring all to abstain from whatever practices tend to prevent its proper observance. So long as the nation is Christian and Protestant, such laws but fairly express the will of the majority, and are necessary in order

that they may enjoy one of their sacred rights. It is not only our right but our duty to have such laws, if we believe that keeping the Lord's day is for the public good. And when such laws are passed, it is the duty of every good citizen to see that they are obeyed. Nothing can be worse for any people than a disregard for law. A law that is trampled upon with impunity is worse than no law. The seeds of license and anarchy and violence are being sown whenever a law can be broken without the infliction of the penalty, and the people who allow it will reap a terrible harvest in the future. The Sunday laws should be so framed that their enforcement will not violate the real rights of any citizen, but will serve simply to preserve the Sabbath as a public institution and to secure to every one the opportunity to observe it; and then they should be enforced. To put forth every effort to secure these desirable ends is the first duty which we owe to our country respecting the Lord's day.

If the conclusions reached in the first part of this book are correct, it is easy to show that the observance of the Lord's day by our people is essential to the welfare of the nation. In a country like ours the only hope of abiding prosperity is that furnished by the virtue and intelligence of the people. These are the chief found-

ation-stones on which a republic must be built. If these prerequisites of good government are absent, the sovereign people may be a worse sovereign to live under than the most despotic monarch that ever disgraced a throne. Without these there can be no assurance that law will be respected, no permanent security for life and property, and no hope of anything in the future but a relapse into barbarism. Just in the proportion that the average citizen has become less virtuous and intelligent on account of the enfranchisement of the negroes and the immigration of ignorant and vicious people from foreign lands, have we reason to fear for the future of our country.

There is no doubt that the proper observance of the Lord's day has an important relation to the maintenance of virtue and intelligence among the people. It keeps their thoughts upon God and upon the necessity of obeying his law. It gives an opportunity for preaching the gospel and the pure morality which forms a part of it. It makes it possible for Christian men and women to instruct in Bible truth those children and youth who would otherwise be neglected. On the Lord's day, while tired bodies are rested, vacant minds can be filled with food for thought. Its influence is calculated to make men thoughtful; and none

but a thoughtful people are fit for freedom and self-government. It saves the working classes from oppression, and promotes their self-respect; it has lessons of humility to teach the rich and great. It is a constant check upon the worldliness and the greed for gain which, in a country of such unlimited resources, tend to absorb the minds and hearts of the people. In a word, it is an essential condition of the existence of those virtues which are the root of all prosperity. Said an eminent judge of the Supreme Court of the United States,\* "Where there is no Christian Sabbath, there is no Christian morality; and without this, free government cannot long be sustained."

There is a close and vital relation between the maintenance of a free government and the proper observance of the Lord's day. It is almost axiomatic that "a free people must be a thoughtful people." How can they be thoughtful if every day in the year is given to toil or to pleasure? Despots are always anxious to amuse their people, but dread to have them think. The right use of Sunday is the best possible promoter of the thoughtfulness and sobriety which a people must have if they are to be fitted for citizenship

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\* McLean.



in a republic. Those who cry out against the tyranny of Sunday laws are probably too blind to see that the abolition of the Lord's day would be the first step in the preparation of themselves to be deprived of all liberty. But we who love our free government, and believe that it is the best form of government for intelligent human beings, will do well to guard by every means in our power the sanctity of the Lord's day. Says Joseph Cook, "I am no fanatic, I hope, as to Sunday; but I look abroad over the map of popular freedom in the world, and it does not seem to me accidental that Switzerland, Scotland, England and the United States, the countries which best observe Sunday, constitute almost the entire map of safe popular government."\*

It is hardly possible to doubt that the prosperity of England and of this country in the past is owing largely to the happy influence flowing from a careful observance of the Lord's day. One does not have to be a partial witness in order to bear this testimony. Says the celebrated Count Montalembert, himself a Frenchman and a zealous Roman Catholic, "Impartial men are convinced that the political education by which the lower classes of the English nation surpass other

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\* Boston Monday Lectures: "Biology" (prelude), p. 162.  
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nations—that the extraordinary wealth of England and its supreme maritime power—are clear proofs of the blessing of God bestowed upon this nation for its distinguished Sabbath observance. Those who behold the enormous commerce of England, in the harbors, the railways, the manufactories, etc., cannot see without astonishment the quiet of the Sabbath day.” Until recently our observance of the Lord’s day has been fully as strict as that of England, and we do not doubt that our rapid growth in material wealth and in civilization is traceable to this as one of its causes.

We have spoken only of the natural results of keeping the Sabbath. We believe that, beyond such results, we may also expect it to secure the blessing of God. He conditioned the prosperity of Israel upon their faithfulness to this obligation. Is there not here a lesson for us? Are we not under the same moral law, with clearer light and greater privileges? Unless God has ceased to reign over the nations, we cannot hope to prosper while trampling upon his laws. On the other hand, we believe that “blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.” Prosperity or calamity will come according to established conditions; but behind all law is the Omnipotent, and the destinies of nations are in his hands. If we become a people without a Sabbath, we may certainly

look for the decay of our institutions and the destruction of all that we hold dear. Moreover, we may expect to see the masses of the people degraded and brutalized, while a cynical disregard for the rights of the poor, and a slavish devotion to the pleasures and honors of this world, will take possession of the more favored. There is something terribly suggestive in the Oriental legend which narrates that a certain colony of Jews degenerated into monkeys on account of long-continued neglect of the Sabbath. We shall not become a nation of monkeys, even though we give up the Lord's day; but we may become something worse. We do not think Dr. Schaff puts the matter too strongly when he says, "Take away the Sabbath, and you destroy the most humane and most democratic institution which in every respect was made for man, but more particularly for the man of labor and toil, of poverty and sorrow. Take away the Sabbath, and you destroy a mighty conservative force, and dry up a fountain from which the family, the church and the state receive constant nourishment and support. Take away the Sabbath, and you shake the moral foundations of our national power and prosperity; our churches will be forsaken, our Sunday-schools emptied, our domestic devotions will languish, the fountains of public and private

virtue will dry up; a flood of profanity, licentiousness and vice will inundate the land; labor will lose its reward, liberty be deprived of its pillar, self-government will prove a failure, and our republican institutions end in anarchy and confusion, to give way, in due time, to the most oppressive and degrading military despotism known in the annals of history. Yea, the end of the Sabbath would be for America the beginning of the unlimited reign of the infernal idol-trinity of Mammon, Bacchus and Venus, and overwhelm us at last in temporal and eternal ruin." \*

Our conclusion is that to keep the Lord's day holy, and to do all in our power to induce others to keep it holy,† are duties which we owe to God, to our fellow men, to ourselves, to our families and to our country. We have reached this conclusion by a consideration of the origin, history and importance of the Sabbath. We may be certain that if each one of us does his duty in relation to it, this blessed institution will be preserved for toiling and sinning humanity, and will perform its glorious mission in lifting our race to a loftier state of being. Indeed, we feel confident

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\* *Princeton Review*, vol. xxxv. p. 570.

† See Appendix F for methods of doing this.

that, though the prospects appear now somewhat unfavorable, the Lord's day will be more and more widely observed, and that its observance will be more and more in accordance with the precepts of the gospel. Just as we believe that

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run,"

so we believe that the day which commemorates his triumph over death and bears his name will be universally observed. But we may miss the blessing and the glory, we may fail to share in the triumph, if we do not do our duty respecting it. If we would enjoy hereafter the endless Sabbath of unspeakable delight which awaits the redeemed, we must, while here on earth, learn to enjoy the rest and the worship and the Christian work of our Lord's day.

"Welcome that day, the day of holy peace,  
The Lord's own day ! to man's Creator owed  
And man's Redeemer ; for the soul's increase  
In sanctity, the sweet repose bestowed ;  
Type of the rest when sin and care shall cease,  
The rest remaining for the loved of God."

# APPENDIX.

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## APPENDIX A.

THE following is a partial list of works on the Lord's day. Only the more important are mentioned, as a complete list would be of little value to the general reader. No attempt has been made to enumerate the review articles on the subject, since they can easily be referred to in Poole's Index, which may be found in every well-equipped library. For the convenience of those who may wish to investigate the subject, I have classified the works mentioned according to the views which they present.

### I.—WORKS ADVOCATING THE CHRISTIAN-SABBATH VIEW.

1. The Doctrine of the Sabbath, Plainely Layde Forth and Soundly Proved, etc., by Nicholas Bound, D.D., of England. London, 1606. 4to. Pp. 479.

2. The Sabbath Viewed in the Light of Reason, Revelation and History, with Sketches of its Literature, by Rev. James Gilfillan, of Scotland. American Tract Society. Pp. 635.

3. Prize Essays on the Temporal Advantages of the Sabbath, by English Workingmen. Published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia.

4. Prize Sermons on the Sabbath. (1883.) S. W. Partidge & Co., London. Pp. 292.

5. The Abiding Sabbath, by Rev. George Elliott. (Fletcher Prize Book, 1884.) American Tract Society. Pp. 275.



6. *The Sabbath for Man*, by Rev. W. F. Crafts. (1884.) Funk & Wagnalls, New York city. Pp. 638.

7. *Eight Studies on the Lord's Day*. (1885.) Anonymous. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

8. Among the review articles, I would call special attention to a series of able articles in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1879-81), by Rev. William DeLoss Love, D.D., and to an article by Dr. Philip Schaff, in the *Princeton Review*, vol. xxxv. p. 570.

#### II.—WORKS ADVOCATING THE DOMINICAL VIEW.

1. *Sunday: its Origin, History and Present Obligations* (Bampton Lectures for 1860), by J. A. Hessey. Pott, Young & Co., New York city. Pp. 436.

2. An article entitled *Sunday Question*. *Fortnightly Review*, vol. iv. p. 764.

#### III.—WORKS ADVOCATING THE ECCLESIASTICAL VIEW.

1. *History of the Sabbath*, by Peter Heylin, D.D., of England. Published in London, 1636. 2 vols., 4to. Pp. 190 and 272.

2. *The Lord's Day* (1853), by E. W. Hengstenberg, of Germany. Translated into English by James Martin, London, 1853. 8vo. Pp. 106. (His view differs somewhat from the ecclesiastical, but we must place his work here rather than in any other of our lists.)

3. *Sunday*, by E. H. Plumptre. Alexander Strahan, London.

4. *Sermons on the Sabbath*, by F. D. Maurice.

#### IV.—WORKS ADVOCATING THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY ON GROUNDS OF EXPEDIENCY.

1. *The Sabbath Question*, by Geo. B. Bacon. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York city. Pp. 263. (Includes  
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speeches by his brother, L. W. Bacon, on Sunday Observance and Sunday Laws.)

2. Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties, by Robert Cox, of Scotland. Simpkins, Marshall & Co., London. Pp. 600.

3. History of Sabbath Literature, by the same author. Same publishers, 1865. 2 vols. Pp. 480 and 499.

#### V.—WORKS ADVOCATING THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH VIEW.

1. History of the Sabbath, by J. N. Andrews. Seventh-day Adventist Publication Association, Battle Creek, Mich. Pp. 536.

2. The Sabbath and the Sunday, by A. H. Lewis. American Sabbath Tract Society, Plainfield, N. J.

#### VI.—WORKS ON THE RELATION OF THE PRIMITIVE AND CHRISTIAN SABBATHS.

1. The Primitive Sabbath Restored by Christ, by Rev. James Johnson. Nesbit & Co., London. Pp. 42.

2. The Two Sabbaths, by Rev. E. Q. Fuller. Phillips & Hunt, New York city. Pp. 101.

3. The Sabbath: Patriarchal, Mosaic, Christian. (Exeter Hall Lectures, 1856-7.)

One who wishes to inform himself on the subject can do so thoroughly by reading a few wisely-chosen works. The historical aspect of the question is fully presented in Hessay's "Sunday"; the argument for the Christian-sabbath view is covered in the present work; and the present state of Sunday observance is indicated with great fullness of detail in Craft's "The Sabbath for Man."

## APPENDIX B.

It was suggested to me by a friend that the effects on the human system of continuous labor, and of labor interrupted by a weekly Sabbath, might be represented to the eye by means of a diagram. He had seen something of the kind, but did not describe it to me. Taking advantage of his hint, I have constructed the annexed diagram for the purpose suggested. It is not claimed that it is a mathematically-exact representation of the facts in the case, but only that it represents them in a general way. In order to meet any possible charge of fancifulness, I have shown the diagram to several physicians, and every one of them asserts that, as to the general fact, it is correct.

This diagram is intended to represent the effect produced on the vital forces of the human system by work, and by rest obtained at night and on the weekly Sabbath. The spaces between the vertical lines represent days and nights as indicated. The horizontal lines represent the vital force, line 1 being the normal condition. The work of each day lowers this; the rest of the night following partially restores it, but not wholly. It gets lower and lower till Saturday night, but the rest of Sunday and of two nights brings it back to the normal condition. This is represented by the first zig-zag line. But if a hard worker does not rest on Sunday his vital force will continue to diminish, until in a few years he will be completely exhausted. This is shown by the second zig-zag line. Suppose the sum total of one's vital force to be represented by two thousand of the spaces between the horizontal lines, then one working steadily without a Sabbath would reach the bottom and die of exhaustion in about twelve years.

[illegible]

## APPENDIX C.

I give below the principal passages of Scripture relating to the Sabbath, quoting from the Revised Version (1881-1885). It would take too much space to quote every verse in which the Sabbath is referred to, but enough are given to represent accurately and fully the teaching of the Bible on the subject. No important passage is omitted, and none which contains a doctrine different from those presented in the quoted passages. This collection will be found convenient by the student of the subject, and any one who reads through these words of holy writ cannot but be impressed by the importance which is given to the Sabbath in the word of God.

## THE EARLY SABBATH.

And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it: because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.—*Gen. 2 : 2, 3.*

And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath spoken, To-morrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake and seethe that which ye will seethe; and all that remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And

it came to pass on the seventh day, that there went out some of the people for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.—*Ex.* 16 : 22–30.

## THE SABBATH OF THE LAW.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.—*Ex.* 20 : 8–11.

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed.—*Ex.* 23 : 12.

Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.—*Ex.* 34 : 21.

Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.—*Ex.* 35 : 2, 3.

Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary.—*Lev.* 19 : 30.



Six days shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of work: it is a sabbath unto the LORD in all your dwellings.—*Lev. 23 : 3.*

And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.—*Num. 15 : 32-36.*

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.—*Deut. 5 : 13-15.*

#### THE SABBATH OF THE PROPHETS AND REFORMERS OF ISRAEL.

And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the servants, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he

said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.—2 *Kings* 4 : 22, 23.

Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them commandments, and statutes, and a law, by the hand of Moses thy servant.—*Neh.* 9 : 13, 14.

They . . . entered . . . into an oath . . . that . . . if the peoples of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy of them on the sabbath, or on a holy day: and that we would forego the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.—*Neh.* 10 : 29–31.

Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.—*Neh.* 13 : 21.

Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth fast by it; that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Also the strangers, that join themselves to the LORD, to minister unto him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast by my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples.—*Isa.* 56 : 2, 6, 7.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, *and* the holy of the LORD honourable; and shalt

honour it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will make thee ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.—*Isa.* 58: 13, 14.

Thus saith the LORD: Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work: but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers; but they hearkened not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, and might not receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but to hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter in by the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places round about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the lowland, and from the mountains, and from the South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, and oblations, and frankincense, and bringing *sacrifices* of thanksgiving, unto the house of the LORD. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden and enter in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.—*Jer.* 17: 21–27.

I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep

my judgments, and do them : and hallow my sabbaths ; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. But the children rebelled against me ; they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall live in them ; they profaned my sabbaths : then I said I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.—*Ezek.* 20 : 19–21.

Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things : they have put no difference between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from the sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.—*Ezek.* 22 : 8, 26.

Thus saith the LORD God : The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days ; but on the sabbath day it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the people of the land shall worship at the door of that gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.—*Ezek.* 46 : 1, 3.

Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn ? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat ? making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit ; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat. The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.—*Amos* 8 : 4–7.

## CHRIST AND THE SABBATH.

At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the cornfields ; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him ; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests ? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless ? But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath. And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue : and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day ? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out ? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep ! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth ; and it was restored whole, as the other.—*Matt.* 12 : 1–11. (Parallel passages, *Mark* 2 : 23 ; 3 : 5 ; and *Luke* 6 : 1, 2.)

And they go into Capernaum ; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught.—*Mark* 1 : 21.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought

up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.—*Luke 4:16.*

And behold, a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath. But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, *these* eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?—*Luke 13:11-16.*

And it came to pass, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. And behold, there was before him a certain man which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not? But they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on the sabbath day? And they could not answer again unto these things.—*Luke 14:1-6.*

Now it was the sabbath on that day. So the Jews said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. But he answered them,



He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. They asked him, Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up *thy bed*, and walk? But he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee. The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. And for this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath.—*John* 5:10–16.

They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.—*John* 9:13–16.

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said.—*Matt.* 28:1–6. (Parallel passages, *Mark* 16:1–8; *Luke* 24:1–9; and *John* 20:1–10.)

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and

Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.—*John* 20 : 26.

#### THE SABBATH AND THE APOSTLES.

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—*Acts* 2 : 1-4.

And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spake unto the women which were come together.—*Acts* 16 : 13.

And Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures.—*Acts* 17 : 2.

And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.—*Acts* 18 : 4.

And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.—*Acts* 20 : 7.

Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.—1 *Cor.* 16 : 2.

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully assured in his own mind.—*Rom.* 14 : 5.

Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I

am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain.—*Gal.* 4 : 10, 11.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day : which are a shadow of the things to come ; but the body is Christ's.—*Col.* 2 : 16, 17.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting *one another* ; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.—*Heb.* 10 : 25.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.—*Rev.* 1 : 10.

## APPENDIX D.

### ABSTRACT OF THE SUNDAY LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

(For most of the facts in the following brief abstract I am indebted to Craft's "Sabbath for Man." See his valuable statement of Sunday laws, appendix, 275-350.)

I. Work is prohibited under penalties in the shape of fines, ranging from \$1 to \$50, in all the states and territories, except California, Louisiana, Oregon, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. This is generally interpreted to mean work for gain in one's ordinary calling. Necessary work is allowed, and judges usually stretch the word "necessary" so as to make it include much that is not really necessary. Louisiana has a local-option Sunday law. In most cases those who observe the seventh-day Sabbath are allowed to engage on Sunday in such work as will not disturb those who keep the latter day. Such a provision ought to be made in the law of every state and territory.

II. Under various penalties, buying and selling, opening stores, exposing goods for sale, and other kinds of business, are prohibited in all the states and territories except California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Ohio, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. In some cases, as in Ohio, the law against labor would be interpreted as covering most kinds of business. To these laws there are many exceptions. For example, New York and Pennsylvania allow the sale of provisions at certain hours on Sunday. In New York tobacco, drugs, fruits, papers and confectionery can be legally sold. Similar exceptions are made in several other states.

III. The sale of intoxicating drinks on Sunday is prohibited except in California, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Nevada, Texas, Arizona, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. The penalties range from \$2.50 to \$500 in fines; but in Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, imprisonment from ten days to six months may be added. In some states cities are allowed to regulate the matter for themselves.

IV. Contracts made on Sunday are illegal in Alabama, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Wisconsin. In other states they are permitted, or there is no law on the subject.

V. Travelling and transportation are permitted in most of the states. Attempts have been made to limit or prohibit them in Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont and Dakota, but the laws are practically dead letters. More legislation and stricter enforcement of the laws are imperatively needed in this matter.

VI. All of the states and territories which have any Sunday laws at all, except Ohio, Virginia and Wyoming, prohibit sports and amusements of various specified kinds

on Sunday. They differ greatly in regard to the kinds of sports named, but those most commonly prohibited are hunting, fishing, shooting, dancing, cards, gaming, racing and public entertainments.

VII. All the laws mentioned are good and ought to be enforced. Friends of the Sabbath in states which have no Sunday laws, or whose Sunday laws are inadequate, should secure their enactment at the earliest possible date. In a few states there are Sunday laws which ought to be repealed. As examples, I may refer to the law of South Carolina which requires every one to attend religious services, and that of Vermont which ordains that Sunday shall be kept as a holy day and that religious meetings must be held by every denomination of Christians. Since these laws are obsolete, it would be better to have them repealed. It will be impossible to enforce reasonable and proper Sunday laws so long as unreasonable and improper laws remain upon the statute books. For the enemies of the Sabbath can make such enforcement unpopular and even ridiculous by enforcing *all* the Sunday laws, the bad as well as the good. It is, then, as much our duty to see that improper laws are repealed as it is to secure the enactment and enforcement of proper laws.

## APPENDIX E.

While this work was going through the press, my attention was called to some statements on "Sunday Labor" in the "Report of the Labor Bureau of Massachusetts," then about to be published. The statements related mainly to the running of steam-cars and horse-cars on Sunday.

I. The report shows that the Sunday trains of forty years ago were not patronized enough to make them profitable. For example, a Sunday train was put on the Eastern road

in 1838 and run till 1847, when it was taken off for want of patronage. But in 1872 the experiment was again tried, with better success. From this last date Sunday railroading has been steadily on the increase. This confirms my assertion (made in the Introduction) that the sentiments of our people with regard to the observance of the Lord's day have been growing more lax. It shows also that the people can put a stop to Sunday railroading.

II. The report asserts that the running of Sunday excursion trains in Massachusetts began with a demand for Sunday trains from Christian people who lived in the suburbs of Boston, but wished to attend church in that city. Probably those people did not realize "whereunto that thing would grow," but that does not excuse them. In this fact Christian people ought to find a reason for doing all in their power to stop the present Sunday excursion business.

III. The report says that "human labor is performed for two purposes, for the production of goods and for personal service," and claims that the latter is far less exhausting than the former. It puts the labor of the brakeman and the horse-car conductor in the second class, and argues that it does not injure them to work seven days in a week as it would injure the weaver or the ploughman.

Even considering the physical effects alone, this conclusion may be fairly questioned. Although the muscles of the brakeman have frequent intervals of rest, while those of the ploughman are continually on the strain, is he not subjected to a mental strain which more than balances the account?

But this argument wholly ignores the religious, which is by far the most important, aspect of the question. If there is any class of laborers which does not need one day in seven for physical rest, there is no class which does not need it for mental, social, and especially for religious, improvement.



## APPENDIX F.

It may be that some Christian readers of this book will desire to know more specifically what they can do to promote the proper observance of the Lord's day. The following suggestions are made in the hope that they may be of practical value to such inquirers. For the sake of a better classification I have divided these hints into two classes: first, those which relate to the things which Christians should not do on Sunday, if they wish to promote its better observance; second, those relating to some positive duties which they must perform before this object will be accomplished. To one class I will give the name *Negative Duties*, and to the other, *Positive Duties*, of Christians in regard to the Lord's day and its better observance.

## NEGATIVE DUTIES.

1. Abstain not only from all labor for gain and all unnecessary work, but also from pleasure riding, worldly visiting, feasting and everything of the kind on Sunday.

2. Do not patronize any Sabbath-breaking institution, corporation or individual. Do not buy or read Sunday newspapers. Do not ride on the horse-cars or steam-cars on Sunday.

3. Do not receive at your house on Sunday meat, ice, milk or any other article of consumption, unless sickness or some other cause makes it absolutely necessary.

4. Do not allow your servants to buy anything for your family on Sunday.

5. Do not write and mail letters, go to the post-office or receive letters from carriers on Sunday.

6. Do not go on Sunday excursions, or allow any one to go who is under your control.

7. Do not join the crowd who go to the seashore or to watering-places to spend Sunday.

8. Do not employ the barber, the cigar vendor or the boot-black on Sunday.

9. Do not allow your children to play in the street on Sunday, or to play noisily in the yard.

10. Do not belong to a corporation or own stock in a company which persistently violates the Sabbath.

If all Christians would abstain from these and similar forms of Sabbath desecration, they would not tempt others to break the Sabbath, and their example would have a mighty influence in promoting its better observance. Many kinds of Sabbath-breaking are sustained by the patronage of professed Christians; other forms are allowed to go on because of their silent approval. They have it in their power to destroy much of it by steadily and faithfully refusing to have any share in it.

#### POSITIVE DUTIES.

1. Make the better observance of the Lord's day a subject of prayer in private and Christian assemblies.

2. Hold meetings to promote this object, of a character similar to the temperance meetings.

3. Let these meetings request pastors to preach on the subject at stated times or whenever they may see fit. Pastors should give more attention to the subject both in their private and public ministrations.

4. Introduce in assemblies, conferences and associational meetings resolutions condemning current violations of the Sabbath, and urging Christians to be faithful in its observance.

5. Let churches discipline their members who openly violate the Sabbath.

6. Let Sunday-schools be so conducted as to inculcate reverence for the day.

7. Parents and teachers should carefully instruct the young in regard to the proper observance of the Sabbath.

8. As a means of instruction and exhortation, circulate the tracts furnished by the various Sabbath associations.

9. Use your influence against opening reading-rooms, museums, libraries, etc., on Sunday.

10. If you are an employer and pay weekly wages, make Monday instead of Saturday your pay day. Urge others to do the same.

11. Promote the Saturday half-holiday movement by every means in your power.

12. Take note of any proposed violations of the Sabbath by railroads, steamboat companies or other corporations, and thwart them by petitions or by appeals to the law.

13. Enforce the law on all persistent Sabbath-breakers.

14. Watch against the repeal of any but unwise Sunday laws, and be ready to circulate petitions to your legislature.

15. Circulate petitions to Congress for the abolition of the Sunday mails.

16. Give all in your employ, household servants as well as others, the greatest possible immunity from Sunday labor.

17. Make a thoroughly religious use of the Lord's day yourself, attending religious services and engaging in religious reading and meditation, and in the exercise of family religion.

It is said that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." We shall find that it is also the price of our Sabbath.

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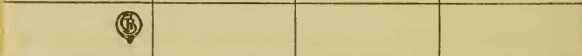


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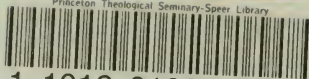
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